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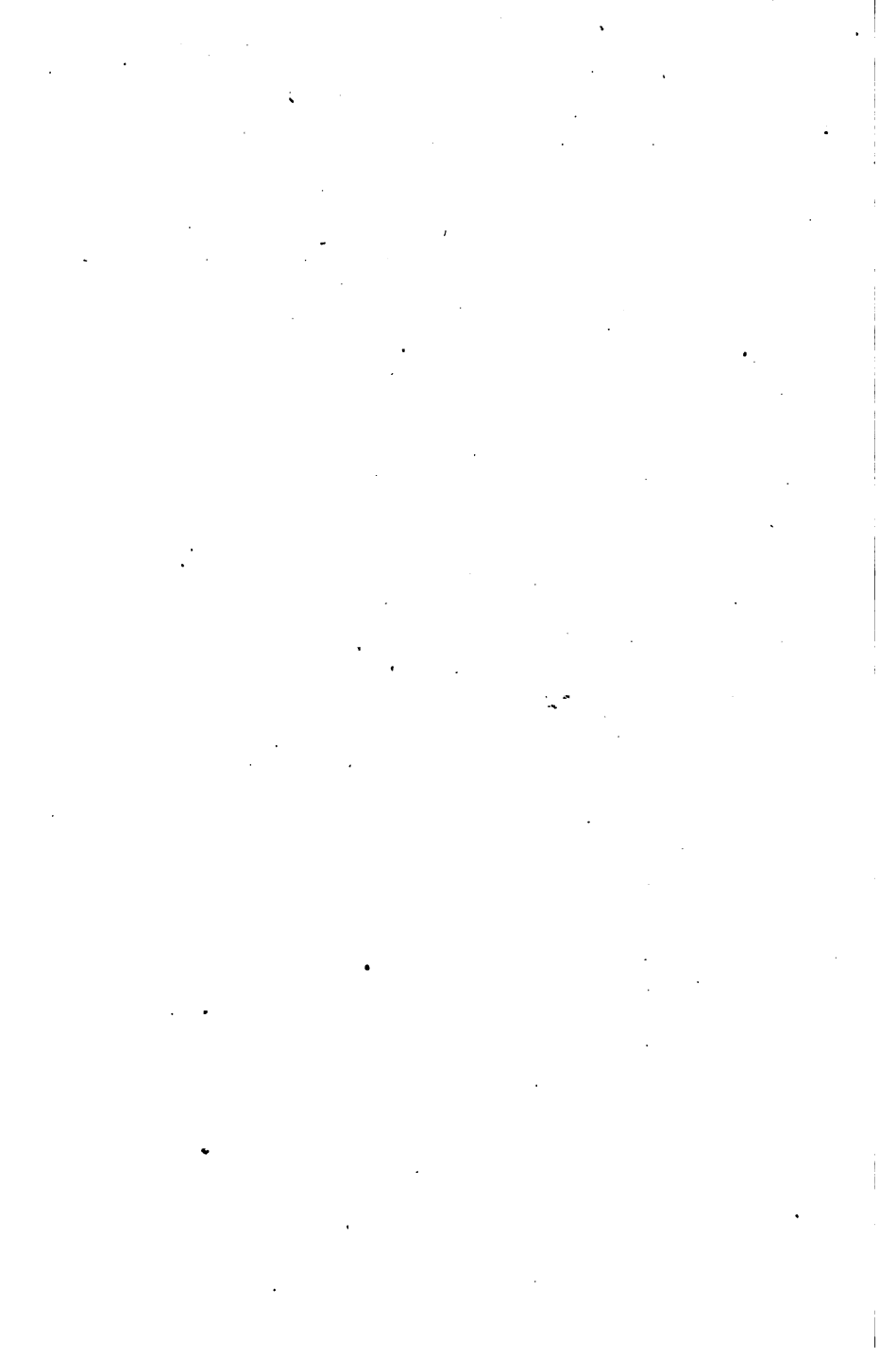
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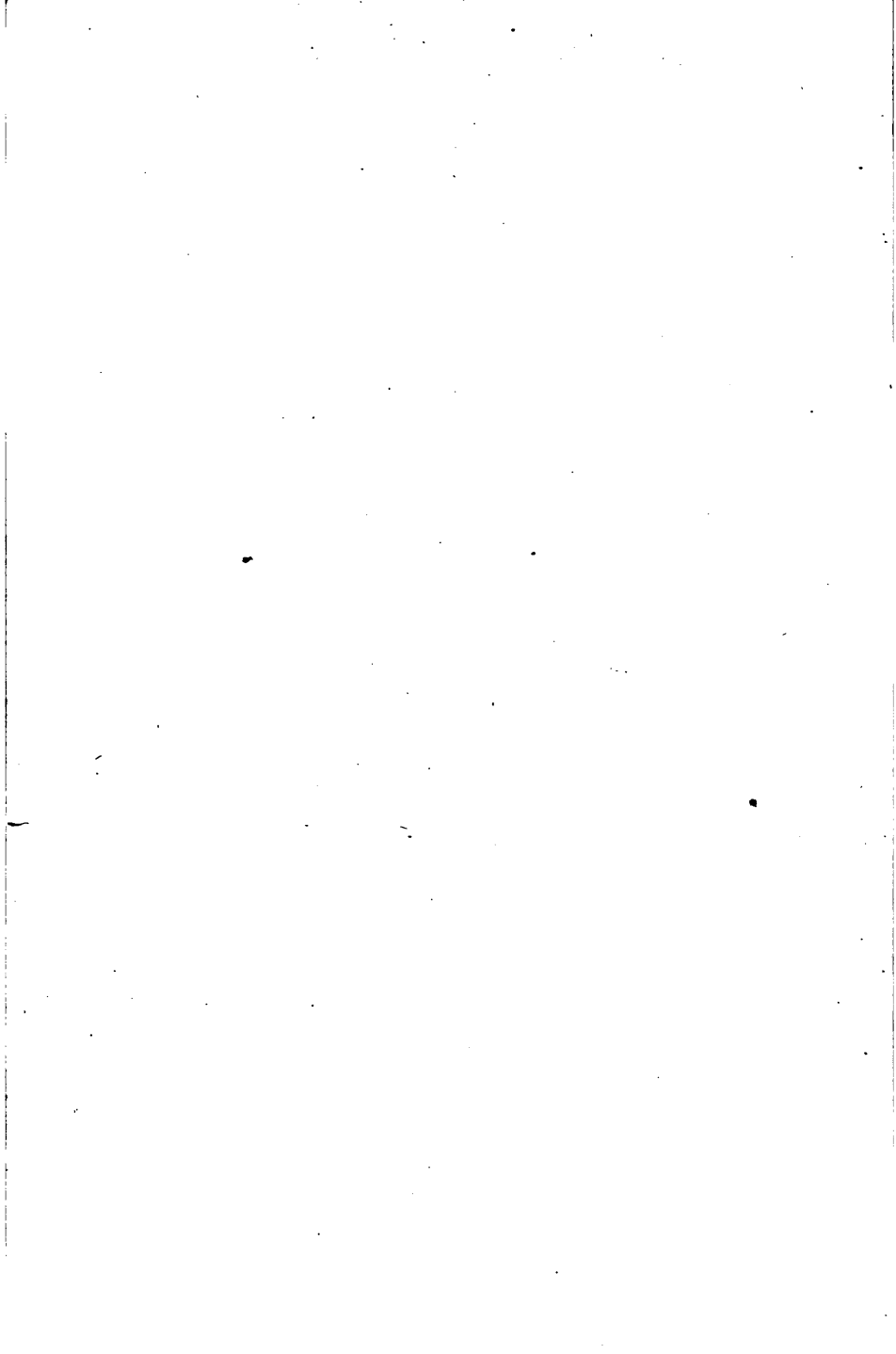
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1918









STRANGE OCCURRENCES.

RELATED BY

LEOPOLD DAVIS.

BOSTON:
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P R E F A C E.

FOR a number of years there was in the Insane Asylum at Utica, N.Y., an idiot, whose sole mania it was to change his name every day; and I could hardly blame him for it. A great deal depends on a name or a title; and, perhaps, had it not been for the attractive and promising *title* of this book, you, dear reader, might never have taken the trouble to peruse these lines, written by an unknown author; but, as you have kindly condescended to do so, I sincerely hope that you may not feel disappointed in your expectations.

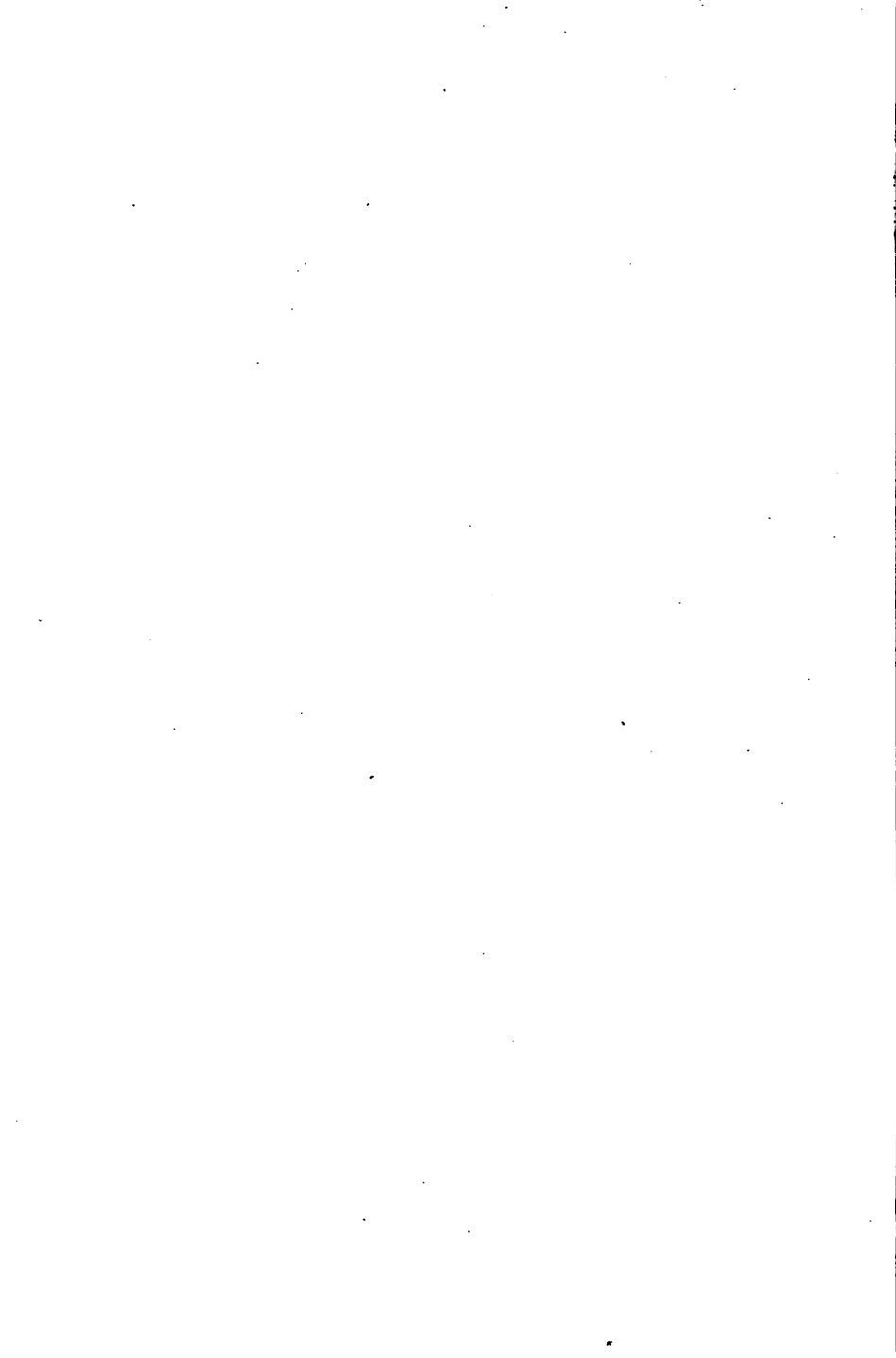
So much for a preface: now for the stories.

THE AUTHOR.



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STRANGE OCCURRENCES.

A MYSTERY REVEALED.

SOME thirty years ago, before the railroads had penetrated every section of the country; when the birds could sing their songs without being interrupted by the shrill sound of a steam-whistle; when the cattle could enjoy their frugal meal without being frightened by puffing and panting locomotives and jingling bells, — I was traveling in Germany and on horseback. I was then young, strong, and courageous. My horse, a noble creature, was as black as coal; and so was my traveling companion, not a negro, but a large Newfoundland dog, whom I called Cæsar. At the time of which I am speaking, the highways were still infested by all sorts of vagabonds and desperadoes; and it was by no means advisable or safe to travel without weapons, for which reason I secretly carried two large pistols. I had been traveling about a month, without being molested or annoyed by anybody or any thing: from which fact I had become indifferent to danger; and, being in good health and full of vigor, I felt as if I could

even welcome any obstacle which might relieve the monotony of my tedious journey. I think that our kind Father in heaven, or perhaps the Devil, if such a gentleman really exists, must have read my heart and granted my wish, as you will presently see.

Imagine a stormy October night. The wind is howling like a wild beast; the rain, occasionally changing into hail, is pouring down in torrents, turning the roads into lakes; and then fancy your humble servant, with drenching-wet clothes, at eleven o'clock at night, alone in a forest, endeavoring to find a path leading to the nearest village.

You will easily perceive that my situation, for the time-being, was by no means comfortable or enviable: but thanks to my good luck, I at last found my way out of the woods; and when I rapped with the butt-end of my riding-whip at the door of the old and dingy-looking inn, it was nearly midnight, and everybody had gone to bed. German landlords, as a general rule, sleep very soundly; and I had waited nearly twenty minutes, when I caught the sound of a pair of heavy wooden shoes on the rickety stairway leading to the entrance. This interval of time afforded me an opportunity to ascertain the name of the tavern, as by the glimmer of a dim light issuing from a lantern in the adjoining stable I could read the sign, which announced to the world that this was "The Inn of the White Swan." The miserable painting intended to represent the emblem looked more like a goose than a swan: hence the explanation, in large white letters on a black board, was very justifiable. At last a man, carrying a lantern, opened the door, and

in a hoarse voice and sulky tone asked me what I wanted. I looked at the fellow for a moment. Had I the gift and talent of a Walter Scott, I could now fill several of these pages with a description of the ugly creature; but not being so gifted, I can only say to you, dear reader, that if among the number of your acquaintances there is a farmer in search of a model for a scarecrow, I will endeavor to procure for him a photograph of the landlord of "The White Swan."

And a nice question it was, to ask me what I wanted, on such a night, fatigued, cold, wet, and hungry as I was. What could I want, but shelter and food for myself and my companions?

The ugly, hateful fellow looked at me with a wicked expression of the face, and then told me, in an abrupt manner, that he could accommodate my horse, but doubted that he could accommodate me, as he had only one empty room up stairs, to occupy which strangers frequently objected.

This remark was sufficient to arouse my curiosity; and with a suspicious glance at the miserable creature, I told him in a very decided tone that this was the very room I desired for the night, and that he should find me an affable and liberal guest, which latter remark made him change his tune in my favor.

After going to the stable to see my horse properly cared for, I entered the spacious bar-room in which a wood fire was still comfortably burning. While my host had gone to the kitchen, I had ample time to meditate on my critical position. Why did my heart beat quicker than usual at that moment? Could it

be fear of anticipated danger? Shame on me, if such could be the case! But no: the emotion has ceased, and I am myself again, calm and composed.

After enjoying a hasty meal, which I shared with Cæsar, I ask the landlord to show me up stairs. The dog followed us. The room assigned to me was rather large. It had a low ceiling, and three windows, the rattling of which could have aroused the dead. There were two old-fashioned chairs, a small table, a washstand, and a broken looking-glass; all of which did not interest me. But the bedstead was the attraction of the room. I had never seen one like it before. Such a marvel of antiquity! What could be its age? Was it fifty, a hundred, or five hundred years old? I was not able to say. A large family could have slept in it, with room left for new arrivals. Four twisted posts, or pillars, one at each corner, supported a heavy headpiece, on which a defaced and withered painting, representing some grotesque figures from the heathen mythology, was still discernible. A heavy curtain of the richest texture, but of doubtful hue, was hanging clumsily from the top of the bedstead, and together with a heavy bed-valance, of a similar pattern, gave the whole affair a gorgeous and almost royal appearance. The quilt was a wonder of patchwork; comprising perhaps over a thousand small pieces of silk, sewed together regardless of harmony of color or symmetry of design, yet it might have taken a year to complete it. I could hardly believe my eyes, when I moved a chair in front of the wonderful piece of furniture; and while gazing at it with intense interest,

I felt as if I had been enchanted. I was aroused from my reverie by the unexpected slamming of a shutter; and, looking at my watch, I found that it was nearly one o'clock, so I concluded to retire.

Will you think strange of me, dear reader, if I confess to you, that, before going to bed that night, I made a careful and thorough examination of the premises. I tested the walls, the floor, the ceiling, and the windows; and after satisfying myself that there was no trap-door or loop-hole, through which danger or treachery could approach me, I commenced to think of sleep in good earnest.

An old proverb says, "Precaution is the mother of wisdom!" and I strongly believe in it. I therefore locked and bolted the door, fastened the windows, examined my pistols, satisfying myself that each was loaded with a good-sized bullet, and then, placing them on the table in front of my bed, I put the weapons in such a position, that, should any one intrude on me during the night, I would be enabled to grasp them in the dark, and fire them off in the direction of the door. The next thing was to arouse my faithful dog; and, leading him to the bedside, I caused him to lie down near the table. Then fastening back the heavy bed-curtains, so as to afford me a full view of the room, I at last retired, leaving the lamp dimly burning on the table. Being very fatigued, I soon fell asleep; and while in the midst of a frightful dream, I was suddenly awakened by a crash, which was seemingly caused by an axe or hatchet bursting open the door of my room. At the same moment a strong and cold current of air passed

through the apartment, extinguishing the lamp. The dog barked furiously. Instinctively I grasped my pistols; and with a fearful report, that shook the frail old building, and seemed to re-echo in the woods, I fired in the direction of the door; and then, with a cold sweat on my brow and a palpitating heart, I awaited the coming events, which apparently had thrown their shadows before them. Five minutes passed, and nothing more than stated had happened. Ten minutes had passed, and neither man nor ghost had made his appearance. Fifteen minutes had passed, and I began to feel awfully ashamed of myself, when my attentive ear caught the sound of a low moan. Silently but cautiously I arose from my bed, found my match-box, lighted the lamp, and, looking around the room, I found to my great astonishment, that I was alone, and that the door was not broken in, but remained in the same condition as I had left it before retiring, and that the windows also were secure.

Could the whole occurrence have been an illusion, caused by a vivid dream? Impossible! . . . But no! Let me reason. Let me reflect on the matter! A strong gale of wind passing through the windows, might have extinguished the lamp; the dog, in consequence of being so suddenly left in the dark, might have been frightened and barked; and the crash which I heard, or imagined I heard, might have been a dream; and the low moan might have been the wind. Surely it could not have been otherwise!

I was now perfectly calm and composed, and laughed at my timidity. Curiosity prompted me to look for the spot where the bullet had lodged. I

looked high and low ; I examined the ceiling, the floor, the door and the windows ; but I was unable to discover the spot by the dim light of the lamp. I therefore discontinued my search for the night, went to bed once more, and soon fell asleep again.

When I awoke it was nine o'clock in the morning : the storm had ceased and the sun was shining brightly into my room. I had slept longer than I had intended. After hurriedly dressing myself, I went down stairs to the breakfast-table, where I was surrounded by a number of villagers, who had heard the report of the pistol, and were anxious to learn what had happened to me during the night. I related the circumstances, assuring them, however, that I was satisfied that a great portion of the strange affair was but a vivid dream. After breakfast I made some inquiry of the landlord regarding the wonderful bedstead, when he stated to me that that ancient piece of furniture had been handed down from generation to generation for many hundred years, and that one of his forefathers had purchased it for a trifling sum at a public sale, where no other bidder could be found, for the reason that a large stain of blood had been discovered on the inside of the bed-curtain, but that this great-grandfather had succeeded in washing it off by some chemical process. Suddenly it occurred to me that I had not found my bullet yet. So I asked the landlord to assist me in my search, which he reluctantly did. The finding of the spot in which the shot had settled was now the only evidence needed to convince me that the suspicions aroused in me during

the strange occurrence of the night were totally unfounded, and that my subsequent argument, ascribing the whole affair to a vivid dream, was correct. But the bullet or bullet-hole must be found. My peace of mind depended on this. So I searched and searched for nearly an hour, until I got tired and gave it up; but strange enough, the fatal spot was nowhere to be found. Greatly annoyed by the whole affair, and disappointed at not finding the shot, I left the inn and the village on the same morning.

Being confident that the pistol, at the time when I discharged it, contained a large bullet, I was equally sure that somebody, man or spirit, mortal or immortal, had received the shot, and carried it away with him in silence.

Nearly ten years had elapsed, and the strange and mysterious occurrence was gradually fading from my memory, when business called me to a place within a few miles of the village in which I had spent that terrible night. Prompted by a feeling of curiosity, I determined to visit the "Inn of the White Swan" once more, in order to ascertain, if possible, from the landlord or his successor, whether the bullet or bullet-hole had ever been discovered. It then being in the month of August, and still very warm, I hired a conveyance, and started for the village at seven o'clock on one of the loveliest of summer mornings. Admiring the picturesque scenery and rich farm land on my way, I soon reached the place of my destination. I had no trouble in finding the main street, on which the inn was formerly located; but on arriving at the spot, I found to my great surprise and disappoint-

ment that the house, once so ominous to me, had vanished into oblivion, having been destroyed by fire.

Upon inquiring as to the fate of its former occupant, I ascertained, that for many years subsequent to my visit various depredations and outrages had been perpetrated upon unsuspecting strangers at the inn, until at last an elderly English traveler, having sought shelter there for the night, had been nearly frightened out of his wits and robbed of a large sum of money, and that said gentleman had applied to the magistrate for assistance to detect the robber, or robbers; that the magistrate thereupon had caused a rigid and careful search to be made on the premises, when discoveries were made, so marvelous in their nature as to surprise and puzzle even the most expert and experienced detectives. I furthermore learned, that during the search the wonderful bedstead had been an object of the greatest interest, as, upon close examination, it was found to contain, in a secreted partition under one-half of the bedstead, an ingenious piece of machinery, which, by the turning of a small wheel, caused strange noises and raps to be produced, and that one part of said partition was large enough to admit and conceal the form of a man, and had communication with a trap-door in the floor, leading to a small dark closet below.

The magistrate, a highly educated gentleman, well versed in ancient history, at once recognized in the wonderful piece of furniture a specimen of the manifold infernal machines of torture used during the reign of the Inquisition, to exact confessions or promises from prisoners belonging to the higher classes of

society. I was also told, that, at the close of the search, the magistrate caused the arrest of the innkeeper; and that on the same day a miserable wretch, his accomplice in crime, while under the influence of liquor, had made important revelations regarding some transactions at the inn, and his connections therewith, to some of the villagers, who, thinking that such a polluted edifice had no right to stand in their peaceful village to disgrace the inhabitants, had taken the law into their own hands, by firing the structure, amidst angry exclamations and curses; and that the villainous innkeeper, after having been properly tried and convicted of robbery, nay, even of foul murder, had ended his blasted career on the scaffold, while his wretched accomplice, having for some years past suffered from the effects of a wound in his breast, probably inflicted by my own hand on that eventful night, had died soon afterwards in prison. And thus the mystery was revealed.

TWO SOULS SAVED FROM DESTRUCTION.

It is an undeniable fact, that in many instances it is easier to write a story than to find a suitable title for it.

After finishing this narrative, which is founded on facts, I selected and rejected three different names, until I decided to call it, "Two Souls Saved by a Lie," not thinking that anybody would object to the strange title as long as I proved the truth of my assertion by a perfectly moral story. One day, however, while stopping at Dayton, Ohio, a friend of mine, who keeps a church book-store, led my attention to the folly of choosing a name which might condemn the story, and perhaps the whole book, in spite of its moral tendency.

"If people would read your story first, and then see its title, they could not and would not object to it; but as this can not be done, you had better change the title," said my friend wisely.

I thanked him for his good advice; and, taking the hint, I adopted the name which it now bears. Whether I do, or do not, prove by my story that two souls were actually saved by a lie, I must leave for you, dear reader, to decide; and therefore I will acquaint you with the facts at once.

Soon after the great Chicago fire, in 1871, I had occasion to visit that wonderful city.

Wandering through the burnt district, I tried to find a certain spot on State Street, where, but a few weeks previous, a friend of mine had occupied a lofty edifice as an art-gallery. However, the vast amount of *débris* rendered it utterly impossible to locate any particular lot; nor had the former occupants as yet found an opportunity to put up signs announcing their present whereabouts, as is customary after every large fire.

While endeavoring to get some information from a police officer, I noticed a well-dressed young woman coming up the street, who, as she approached us, suddenly stopped; and staring at me with an expression of surprise, she seemed almost spell-bound, for her vivid, dark eyes were opened to their utmost capacity, while her lips were quivering with emotion.

No sooner had I proceeded on my way than she stopped me, expressing a desire to speak to me. Her reasonable request did not at all surprise me; for in times of a great calamity, like that which had just then befallen the metropolis of the West, every one not being a sufferer himself expects to be called upon for sympathy and assistance. Taking it for granted that she was in search of pecuniary aid, I at once resolved, in case I should consider her worthy of such, to do the very best I could to alleviate her sufferings. Expressing my willingness to hear what she had to say, her apparently worried face suddenly brightened, and she then continued as follows:—

“I presume you are a stranger in this city, and as

such you may perhaps fear to be imposed upon, but I wish you to believe me, for as sure as there is a God over us I am telling you the truth. I want no money from you; but, if you are willing, you can render me a service which will be more valuable to me than all the treasures this earth could hold. I am no sufferer from the fire, but from a calamity far greater than all the elements combined could produce; namely, the misfortune of having a drunken and abusive husband. I married him six years ago, while on a visit to Milwaukie, without the consent of my parents, who live at St. Paul, Minnesota. They felt very angry at me for it at the time; but learning from my letters that my husband, who is a cabinet-maker by trade and a skillful mechanic, took good care of me, and that we lived happily together, they soon became reconciled to my marriage; but up to the present time my husband has not seen any of my relatives. A year ago, being out of employment for nearly three months, he unfortunately took to drinking; and of late he has become an habitual drunkard, and so abusive to me that I can not endure my life of misery any longer. This morning, after having been brutally beaten by him in a drunken fit, and having no children to weep for me, I contemplated suicide; and when I met you I was on my way to the lake in search of an isolated spot, where, by drowning myself, I could end my wretched existence. Now, let me tell you, that you look so much like my eldest brother that I could have almost sworn you were he, had I not known, for a certainty, that he is at present in San Francisco. You surely must have

noticed my astonishment at seeing you, and I know that for a few moments I was guilty of the impropriety of staring at you; but I could not help it, for I wanted to make sure that I was mistaken in the person. No sooner had you passed on than it suddenly occurred to me, that perhaps, by representing yourself to my husband as my brother, who had come to take me away, you might be instrumental in reforming him; for I know, that, in spite of all his abuse, he still loves me, and that it would kill him to part with me for ever. I would not detain you very long; and I am almost certain that the little deceit which we may have to practice upon him will have the desired effect, and may perhaps save him and me from destruction. Can you and will you grant me this favor?"

Here the woman paused, looking at me anxiously and inquiringly. My heart told me that her story was true, and I expressed myself ready and willing to grant her request. But there were certain things to be considered, which, by not being properly managed, might cause the failure of her well-planned scheme. I knew nothing of her or his family affairs; and by a little shrewdness on his part, I might be easily caught in a lie. I mentioned these objections to her; but, prompted by a woman's ready wit, she soon succeeded in overcoming all possible obstacles. In less than ten minutes I considered myself as well posted about their family affairs, as if I had known them for years. Giving her my full consent to do as she desired, we now went to their house in West Washington Street. They occupied the lower part

of a small cottage, not very far from the entrance of the tunnel. Arriving at the house, she rang the bell, when I heard a hoarse, gruff voice in the hall ask, "Who is there?"

"It is I, Charley," the little woman replied. "Open the door. I want to speak to you."

He asserted his readiness by saying, "All right! Wait a moment;" but seemed to have some difficulty in complying with his wife's request, for more than five minutes elapsed and he was still fumbling at the lock, without being able to open the door. At last he succeeded; and before us stood a man of about thirty, with features that once must have been very handsome, but now dissipation had disfigured them. His unshaved face looked pale, haggard, and unclean, and his fine black hair was uncombed. He wore a soiled red woolen shirt, faded brown pantaloons, and he was barefooted. In fact, his whole appearance showed utter neglect of person. I had kept out of his sight, while his wife was entering the house.

"Where the deuce have you been so long?" was his first salutation to her.

"I will tell you presently," she replied.

Then turning around towards me, she continued, —

"Come in, Brother John. You need not be afraid of him. He is in a helpless condition."

I entered the hall. I must confess that never before had I witnessed such a sudden change in the conduct of a drunken person, as at that moment I beheld in this pitiable victim of intemperance. If the man really was as beastly intoxicated as he at first appeared, one thing was certain, and that was,

that he became perfectly sober at seeing an unexpected visitor, and on hearing his wife call me brother. He first seemed confused; and, after gazing at me with an expression of awe, he slowly approached me, and taking my hand, he civilly said, —

“Glad to see you, sir.”

His wife, apparently surprised at his decent demeanor, said in a snappish tone, —

“I guess you would not be so very glad, if you knew what he came for!”

“What did your brother come for?” asked the husband.

“To take me home with him!” replied the wife.

“You do not mean that, Nellie?” he exclaimed.

“You will soon see whether I do or not!” said she.

The scene I next witnessed beggars description. The unfortunate man, from all appearances comprehending the full extent of the punishment awaiting him in losing a wife, whom, in spite of all his cruelties towards her, he still loved, first threw himself at her feet, and, in the agony of his repenting heart, entreated and implored her, in the most pitiful manner, by endearing names and vows of reform, once more to forgive him and to remain. Not being able to read forgiveness in her eyes, he now begged of me, in the most earnest manner, not to take his only hope from him, but to intercede for him, and try to change her resolution. I told him that I had no power in the matter, as our parents, having heard of the unhappy and wretched life which their only daughter was leading, insisted upon her immediate return to St.

Paul, and would not listen to any plea on his or my part; and that in case I should fail to bring her home, her father himself would come to Chicago, and take her by force. Seeing that he failed to make a favorable impression on me, the unfortunate man went back to his wife, and once more tried his utmost to dissuade her from leaving him. She at last seemed to waver in her resolution; and after telling him that she would reconsider the matter, and talk it over with me, we left the house, promising him to call again the next morning.

"Do you think that he will ever reform?" asked I, after we had left the house.

"I verily believe he will," replied the woman; "for although my life, for a year past, has been almost unendurable, I have never, even under the most trying circumstances, threatened to leave him: and I think that the fear of a possible separation is nearly enough to drive him mad, for, although you may not believe it, I know that my husband still loves me."

"Well," said I, "I am glad to hear that you have such faith in him; and if you think that I have played the part of a brother well enough, I am willing to appear in the second act again to-morrow."

Smiling at my somewhat comical remark, she thanked me for my kindness; and, after making an appointment to meet her at the corner of Randolph and Wells Streets at ten o'clock the next morning, we separated.

"What a strange adventure this is!" said I to myself, after she had left me. "If I should read such a thing in a book, I would consider it a well-contrived

plot of the author, while this is reality." Even after I had retired that night, I could not help thinking of the matter, wondering how the affair would end.

At the appointed time on the ensuing morning, I was at the place of rendezvous, and had hardly waited five minutes, when the lady made her appearance.

"I see you are punctual," she said. "How shall I ever be able to reward you for all the trouble I have put you to?"

"Oh! do not mention it. I only hope I may be of some service to you," said I; and on we went in the direction of her house.

No sooner had we reached the unassuming little dwelling, than, without being obliged to ring the bell, the door was quickly opened; and before us stood, to my utter astonishment, a handsome, neatly-dressed and cleanly-shaved man, nay, let me say gentleman, for such now was the drunken wretch of yesterday.

I could hardly believe my eyes; and, turning around towards the young woman at my side, I noticed a look of satisfaction steal over her careworn face.

"What do you think of him now?" she whispered.

"Oh! he seems to be all right," said I.

Approaching his wife, he made a motion to kiss her; but she evaded him, and, entering the small sitting-room together, we seated ourselves.

"I am very sorry," said the unfortunate man, addressing me, "that you have had occasion to form such a bad opinion of your brother-in-law, on seeing him for the first time; but I sincerely hope that this

unfavorable impression will be wiped out from your memory, at some future time, by my good behavior. Perhaps you may doubt my word, when I assure you, that, in spite of all my unkindness towards your sister, I never ceased to love her, and that she always was, and still is, my life, my hope, my all! I do not ask her forgiveness now; but if you could only persuade her to stay, I swear, by all that is sacred to me, that she shall never have cause to regret it."

"Truly," said I, "if I felt assured that you were really sincere in your resolution to reform, I would, even at the risk of displeasing our parents, advise Nellie to try you once more."

"Well, then," he exclaimed, "if you wish, you can take me before a magistrate, or a minister of the gospel, or before any one you choose, and I will take the most solemn oath on the Bible, that I will never taste a drop of liquor again."

"What say you, sister?" said I, looking at his wife.

"Well, John, I have a great notion to try him once more; but if he should ever forget himself again, I will telegraph to you, or to father, to take me home at once," replied the wife.

Words are inadequate to picture the joy of the poor fellow. No sooner had she spoken those encouraging words, than he hastened to her side, and holding her in a fond embrace, he kissed and caressed her tenderly, sobbing at the same time, as if his heart would burst with emotion. I went to the window to hide my moistened eyes, for the touching scene had greatly agitated me. My part of the performance

was now at an end ; and, to tell you the truth, I was heartily glad of it. Under the pretense of wishing to say a few words privately to my sister, I called her into the hall, and then and there gave her my address in New York, requesting her to drop me a line occasionally, informing me how matters were getting on at her house.

“ Oh ! how much I am indebted to you for the great service you have rendered me ! May Heaven repay you for your kindness : I am powerless to do so myself ! ” she whispered into my ear.

Returning to the room, I took leave of her husband, reminding him once more of the solemnity of his vow ; and then, wishing a hearty farewell to my adopted sister, I left the house, highly pleased with the happy *finale* of the drama, thinking what a nice story this would make for the “ Sunday Mercury,” or some New-York weekly.

More than six months had elapsed when one morning, on receiving my mail at my office in New York, I found a letter dated at Chicago, of which the following is a true copy : —

“ DEAR SIR, — In pursuance of your request and my promise, I now take the liberty of addressing you. Undoubtedly you will be glad to hear that my husband has kept his promise, and that once more we live happily together. His employer, who strongly advocates temperance, having been highly pleased with Charley’s reformation, has given him an interest in the business, and we are getting along nicely. Should you visit Chicago at any time, you must not fail to call upon us. I have explained every thing to my husband, and he expresses himself as thankful to you as I am myself. Inclosed please find his card, with our address on Michigan Avenue, where, with my

father's assistance, we have bought a cosy little homestead. Charlie desires to be kindly remembered to you, and joins me in wishes for your welfare.

“Truly yours,

“NELLIE B——.”

Since the receipt of this pleasant news, I have twice had occasion to visit my friends, at their now happy home; and as it is very probable that, without my timely interference, both would have gone to destruction, I really think that I am justified in asserting that two souls were saved by a lie.

What say you, dear reader?

THE DEAD KILLING THE LIVING.

FOR many years past, it has afforded me a great deal of pleasure to study human nature and to play the part of the unobserved observer.

Being called upon to travel a great part of the year, I am of course brought in contact with the strangest variety of character, and therefore I am often fully repaid for the trouble I take to read the hearts of my fellow-creatures. Strange as it may appear, I am forced to admit that a jovial face and a light-hearted disposition rarely attract me; while in a stern, dreamy, sentimental, or suffering expression of a face I take the most profound interest.

Now, as there are a great many sad and unhappy people in this world, I am amply supplied with interesting subjects for my study; and thinking that you, dear reader, might possibly like to become acquainted with one of them, I will tell you what I really know to be true.

In imagination I see your incredulous smile at the strange and seemingly improbable title of my narrative. Have you forgotten that Wilkie Collins once wrote a beautiful little novel entitled "The Dead Alive?" And as he has convinced you by the ingeniously contrived plot that the strange title of his in-

teresting book was by no means ill-chosen, so mean I to prove to you, that I have not assumed too much in asserting that the dead killed the living.

Well, then, be kind enough to listen.

Some years ago, while taking my dinner at a fashionable hotel in one of the larger New-England cities, my attention was strangely attracted by the absent-minded manner in which my neighbor at the table gave his orders to the waiter.

"I take soup," he said; and then, first looking at a newspaper before him, and afterwards staring into vacancy, he appeared to speak inwardly; for although he did not utter a word, his lips were moving as in speech. The waiter brought the soup; but the man continued staring into vacancy, noticing neither the waiter nor the soup. But after a while he said, "And fish," apparently finishing by these two words the sentence previously addressed to the waiter. Then five minutes elapsed, when his right hand began to search for a spoon; and, finding one, he commenced eating his soup, without lowering his head and without ceasing to stare into vacancy. The waiter returned with the fish, but my neighbor took not the slightest notice of him. He then asked for further orders, but received no answer in return. I was delighted. What an interesting subject for study I had found in the stranger, and what a handsome man he was! There was the high forehead of a great statesman, the classic Grecian nose of an ancient statue, the dark and dreamy eye of a poet, the long and curly black hair and moustache of an artist; but above all, the sad expression of great mental suffer-

ing. My eyes were fairly riveted on the stranger; and I was just wishing in my heart to learn something more about him, when he suddenly turned around towards me, and said in a mild, sad tone, "I think I have seen you here before." So unexpectedly fell his simple remark upon my ear, that I felt confused and almost frightened; but, after a moment's hesitation, I replied, "It is very likely that you have, sir."

"It is very strange," he continued, "that I should recognize *you* above all others; for of late I have sometimes failed to recognize my nearest and dearest friends."

He said no more; but by this time I had become so greatly interested in the man, that I was determined to keep up the conversation a little longer. Having finished my meal, I now ordered a cup of coffee, as an excuse for remaining at the table. I felt that it was my turn to speak; so I asked, in a sympathizing tone, "Are you ill, sir? or are you mentally suffering?"

"Both," he replied. "I am in ill-health, and suffering from a great affliction, even worse than death."

I now felt that I had no right to pry into his secrets by asking another question; so I merely said, "I feel, indeed, sorry for you, sir."

"I thank you," he replied, and then continued, "I need sympathy; and I feel that I have found in you a sympathizing friend. The earnest and truthful expression of your face can not belie you. There seems already to exist between us a relationship of soul, which I can not fail to recognize. If you can make it

convenient, please call on me this evening : I desire to give you an outline of my sad history. You will find me at room number seven."

"Number seven!" I muttered to myself. I am not superstitious, dear reader; yet I would have preferred to have heard him mention some other number. However, I promised to call; and so I did, at eight o'clock on the same evening. I found him sitting in an easy-chair, dressed in a gray morning-gown, trimmed with black velvet. He had moved his chair in front of a very large mirror, which reached from the floor to the ceiling. The dim gas-light made his pale face appear still paler. At his right stood a card-table, on which lay a book. The name of the book was printed in gilt letters on the back. It was "Milton's Paradise Lost." He did not arise when I entered, but merely said, "Be seated, sir."

I placed my chair so as to look him full in the face. He was seemingly rehearsing something in his mind; for nearly ten minutes had elapsed when at last he spoke as follows:—

"I promised to give you a sketch of my sad history, even before I learned your name, nor do I ask for it now. It matters little to me *who* you are, while my heart tells me *what* you are. I feel that you are taking a kind interest in me; and I consider it my duty to give you at least so much of my history as the world will ever know of it. Will you listen?"

"I will," said I.

"Well, then," he continued, "let me tell you, in the first place, that I had a twin brother, who looked so much like myself, that even some of our relatives

occasionally had trouble, after seeing one of us alone, to say positively which of us they had met; for we always dressed alike, and were of the same height. Being both in good health, and of a cheerful disposition, this fact was by no means a source of grief to us, but, on the contrary, a source of merriment. One day my brother was getting ready to start on a journey to Canada, to visit a young lady to whom he was engaged to be married, when one of our female cousins, in mistake, kissed me good-by, thinking it was my brother George. I remember how heartily he laughed at the occurrence. Poor fellow! Little did we think then that we should never see him alive again; for only two days had passed since his departure, when we received a telegram from Hamilton, Ont., stating that my brother George had died very suddenly, under the most singular and distressing circumstances. On the receipt of the sad news, I instantly packed my trunk, and started for Canada. The day after this I arrived at Hamilton, went first to the Royal Hotel, and from there took a conveyance to the ill-fated mansion. The body of my brother had already been prepared for transportation, and was then lying in a metallic coffin, exposed to view. Having had in life a little more color in his face than myself, he looked in death even more like me than ever. Entering the room in company with the parents of the young lady whom my brother had loved dearly, they both seemed to notice the striking resemblance at the same time; for they first looked at the corpse, then at me, and then at each other. The sad tidings next received from

them I shall never forget, even if I were to live a thousand years. They told me that their daughter was suddenly taken ill on the day previous to my brother's arrival, and sank so rapidly, that at ten o'clock on the ensuing morning she was pronounced dead by the physicians. My unfortunate brother arrived at the house at nine o'clock in the evening of the same day. On hearing of her death, he became wild with despair, and so continued until midnight, when he suddenly grew calm, and insisted upon watching the corpse, in company with the young lady's brother. I further learned, that, toward morning, my brother again became restless, and in the agony of his heart, while bending over the handsome face, impressed a kiss on her lips; when the young girl, — who, as it appears, was really only lying in a trance, — suddenly revived, and attempted to sit up; whereupon my poor brother, overcome by sudden fright, had fallen back on the floor, and had almost instantly died from a stroke of the heart; and in this way, you see, *the dead had actually killed the living!*

“Imagine the grief and sadness of my heart on receiving this distressing news. I had never seen my brother's betrothed; but I knew from him, and from a photograph I had seen of her, that she was a woman of rare beauty. There was no doubt that she had loved poor George dearly; and his sudden death, innocently caused by herself, was too much for her to endure; and, almost from the very moment in which she saw him expire, symptoms of a deranged mind had been noticed in her by her

friends. I asked permission to see her, but was denied the privilege by the family physician, who also, having noticed my striking resemblance to the deceased, was fearful of the evil effect which my presence might have upon her weak nerves. I was grieved, disappointed, and almost vexed, at not being granted permission to see her; for I felt irresistibly drawn towards her by a magic power which I was at a loss to comprehend. In daytime and at night her sweet image was in my mind's eye. I felt that I could willingly give the rest of my life for the happiness of beholding the lovely creature, if only for a single moment. I lingered at the house as long as etiquette would permit, and finally started on my homeward journey, taking with me the body of my brother.

"On the third night after my return I had a dream, in which the young lady appeared to me in the shape of a guardian angel. She bent gently over me, kissed me on the forehead, and beckoned me to follow her. I awoke; and, from that moment, I felt that I had fallen desperately in love with her,—the woman I never saw,—and that I must see her at all hazards. Nothing in the world could now prevent me from going to Canada once more. My relatives and friends strongly objected to my resolution, and probably would have declared *me* insane, had I not, in every other respect, acted as rationally as I did. But my determination was too strong; and a few days afterwards I arrived, for the second time, at Hamilton.

"My coming had, unbeknown to me, been tele-

graphed to the father of the unfortunate girl ; and I had scarcely entered my name on the register of the hotel, when the kind old gentleman himself entered the front-door to greet me. I invited him up to my room ; and then and there we had a long and earnest conversation regarding my visit to the private hospital, to which the idol of my heart had been taken. Her father at first positively denied me the privilege of seeing her : but I entreated and implored so earnestly and so pitifully, that he at last wavered ; and after promising him faithfully, that, if I could be permitted to visit the place of her confinement, I would vow not to approach her, but be content with looking at her from a distance, he at last reluctantly granted my request. I trembled like a leaf when I entered the spacious reception-room of the old and gloomy edifice, from which I should be permitted to look down into the garden in which the object of my passionate and unaccountable love was then enjoying the fresh air. My heart was ready to burst from a torturing feeling of suspense, when I hastened to the open window. Another moment, and my eyes were riveted on the loveliest face and form I ever beheld in my life. My doom was sealed ; I had lost all control over myself ; I forgot my vow, my caution ; I forgot all in that moment. Frantically I jumped first on a chair, then on the window-sill, and from there, with an unearthly shriek of joy, into the garden below. A convalescent maniac, — a tall and muscular female, — frightened at my sudden and unexpected descent from the window, suddenly seized me in a fit of rage and frenzy,

and, grasping my throat, seemed determined not to loose her hold until she had strangled me. Only by the greatest effort on my part did I succeed in freeing myself from her; and, with a renewed exclamation of joy, I then leaped upon the horror-stricken object of my affection. At my sudden approach, she turned deathly pale, staggered, sank on her knees; then quickly rose again, fell backward, and, with an expression that will haunt me to my grave, exclaimed, 'George, I am ready to follow you!'

"This was the last I heard or saw on that fatal day; for, as they afterwards told me, I had fallen in a swoon.

"When I awoke again, it was night; and I found myself in bed, in a strange room, attended by an elderly man, whom I had never seen before. I inquired where I was, and was told that I was in a hospital. This was the only question I asked at the time. My condition for the next ten days was a state of nervous debility and heavy stupor. I took my medicine and my food regularly, saw the doctor every day, but did not have any particular thought or care of what was going on around me. On the eleventh day, as my attendant afterwards told me, I awoke early in the morning, and seemed to feel much easier. My memory had returned; and I put various questions to the man, some of which he refused to answer. I was just about getting out of patience with him, when the physician, in company with my aged father, entered the room. My father came to my bedside, kissed me on the cheek and congratulated me on my recovery. His face showed a great

grief, and he begged of me not to ask him any questions until we had arrived at home. I had no strength to do any thing, no desire to resist any thing. All I did was to weep and silently submit. For many days after we had arrived at home, I felt and acted in the same manner, until one night the idol of my heart once more appeared to me in a dream. The next morning I inquired of my father whether the young lady was dead or alive, when he stated to me that she had died on the day of my visit to the hospital, and that it was supposed that the sudden fright of seeing *me*, who looked so much like her departed lover, had been the cause of her death. You would imagine that such startling revelations would have set me wild; but, strange enough, they had not the slightest effect upon me. I knew it all the time, without ever having been told of it, and merely asked the question to hear the confirmation of my inward knowledge.

“As you see, my friend, I have managed to live until this hour; but my days are numbered and my worldly affairs are all arranged. I shall follow her when the day arrives. And now you have learned the cause of my grief and the secret of my life. Pardon me, if I have detained you here too long in listening to my sad story. We may not meet again in life, but I wish you to think of me always with kindness and pity.”

So saying, he arose from his seat, and, accompanying me to the door, he added, —

“Good-night, my friend. May your life be more blessed than mine!”

“Good-night, sir,” said I: “may Heaven grant *you* courage and strength to bear up under your great affliction!” and, after shaking hands with him, I left the room.

This interview took place in the early part of August; and returning to the same city about two months later, I was grieved to learn that my unfortunate friend, while in a deplorable state of depression, had laid violent hands upon himself, and had ended his miserable existence on the night of the 7th of October, by shooting himself in the breast; and after a few hours of intense pain and suffering, had finally closed his eyes in death.

On hearing this sad news, I felt a sympathizing tear trickle down my cheek, while I inwardly muttered a short but fervent prayer for the peace and rest of his soul.

And thus you see, dear reader, that again *the dead had killed the living!*

HOW NEAR I CAME TO SEEING A GHOST.

DEAR reader, in order that you should more readily comprehend this story, it will be unavoidably necessary for me to furnish you with a little drawing of a window; and here it is.

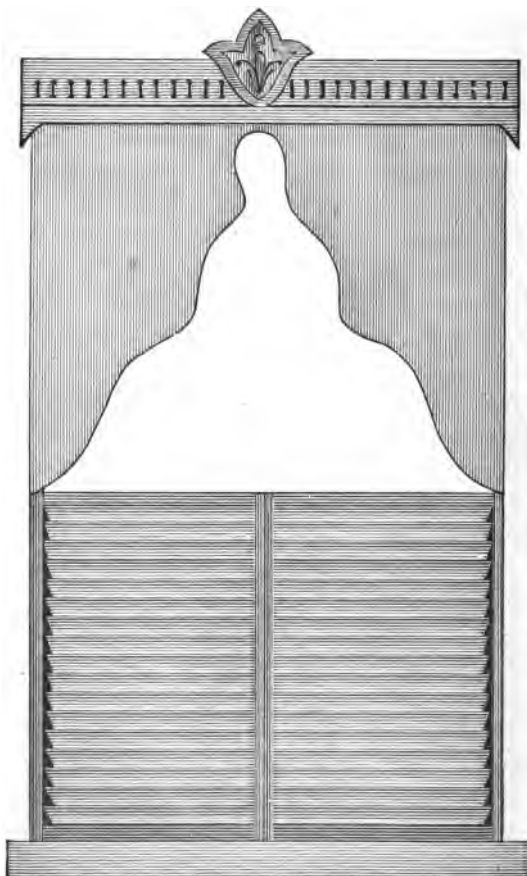
It would be premature to ask you to examine this little sketch just now; but your attention will be called to it in the course of events connected with my little narrative, which I vow to you is not a matter of fiction, but a simple and truthful statement of my own experience, and as such please accept it.

On the ninth day of April, A.D. 1869, business called me to Erie, Penn., where I stopped at the well-known Reed House.

The room I occupied was a large and handsomely furnished apartment, fronting on the square. Being comfortably located, and of social habits, I invited a few friends, gentlemen from New York, whom I accidentally met at the hotel, to spend the evening at my room, which they cheerfully did.

We passed the time by singing, reading, reciting poetry, telling anecdotes, &c. No cards were played, nor any wine or other stimulants used by us on that occasion. The latter fact I especially desire to impress on your mind, as you might possibly think that

my overheated brain had something to do with my sight; but I assure you this is not so, and you may believe me.



Well, then, let me continue my story. It must have been after eleven o'clock when my friends left

my room; and after winding my watch I went to the window, or rather windows, for there were two, and closing the inside shutters of one window entirely, so as to exclude all light from it, I left the upper shutters of the other window wide open, so as not to darken the room totally. This last-named window is the one represented in my drawing, and, as you will afterwards see, has a good deal to do with my story. I am quite certain that before going to sleep that night I said a short but fervent prayer, which, I am almost ashamed to admit it, when being overtired I occasionally forget. By this confession to you, dear reader, who may be an entire stranger to me, you will at least see that I am not a hypocrite; and, after you will have read the end of my story, you will also be bound to admit that I am not a coward. But let me come to the point. It must have been near midnight when I fell asleep; and I could have scarcely slept half an hour, when from some unknown cause, and contrary to my habit, I suddenly awoke, and, looking across the spacious apartment, I plainly perceived, at the farther end of the room, an apparition, strange, yet not fearful to behold,—a woman in white, such as we read of in old ghost stories of haunted houses or castles.

My very first impression was, that I was dreaming; but having satisfied myself that I was fully and unmistakably awake, I continued to gaze with wonder, though not with fear, at the strange and unexpected visitor.

It would be a barefaced lie should I now state to you that I felt very comfortable or happy at the

time; yet to my credit may it be said, that I felt by no means afraid.

I had scarcely looked at the apparition for five minutes, when, by some unexplainable train of thoughts, it occurred to me that this day had been the ninth day of April,—my birth-day,—a thought which had not entered my mind during the day or evening; and now I fancied that this apparition might have something to do with the day of my death. This thought aroused me to full consciousness and energy; and having for many years past harbored an ardent desire to experience something supernatural, I at once determined to unravel the mystery of this midnight intrusion. So I sprang unhesitatingly and resolutely out of bed; and proceeding across the room, with arms outstretched before me, I slowly but steadily approached the magic circle in which I beheld the apparition. Could any of my friends have played a trick on me?—New York traveling men are capable of doing such a thing. But why ask myself that question, while it lies in my power to satisfy myself of the truth at once?

I am now standing before the chair on which the lady apparently is sitting. Suddenly I place my hands on her shoulders, but to my great surprise and disappointment I feel *nothing*. Then follows a strong palpitation of my heart and a moment's reflection how to act. Something tells me to sit down on the chair on which the phantom is sitting. I do so, and I feel *nothing but the seat of the chair*. Instinctively I look towards the window; and, like a flash of lightning, the mystery at once reveals itself.

And now, dear reader, I would beg of you to look at my little drawing.

You will please to observe that the window is decorated with a lambrequin, which, being scalloped on the inside, forms at the window the outline of a figure in the shape of a lady in a sitting position. The room is darkened; and the only light admitted issues from the moon, throwing the deceptive outline brilliantly on the shadowed wall, thus making the most extraordinary illusion perfect.

And so you see, dear reader, that, after all, I was cheated out of seeing something supernatural; and, if you only knew my romantic nature, you would indeed pity me for the great disappointment.

Had I been a coward, I might have run out of the room, and then sworn that I had seen a ghost. As it is, I often laugh at the idea of *how near I came to seeing a ghost.*

THE PORTRAIT OF THE DECEASED.

THE author of this book being busily engaged in compiling matter for his next story, desires me to introduce myself to you, dear reader ; and, in complying with his request, I will be as expeditious as practicable, as I may afterwards be compelled to task your patience in listening to my strange but truthful story.

Well, then, let me first inform you that I am a Frenchman, of middling height and dark complexion, like many of my countrymen. I was born and brought up in Paris. I lost my parents before I was eight years old, inheriting nothing save an honest name and a few valuables. Through the kindness and liberality of an uncle, a retired sea-captain, whom I had never seen, as he had settled down in the West Indies years before, I received a fair education and a small annuity, enabling me to choose my vocation ; and at the age of thirteen, possessing a moderate amount of talent, I commenced studying the art of portrait-painting, under the instruction and guidance of an eminent artist. Thanks to his endeavors and to my zeal and perseverance, I progressed finely ; and when, after eight years of study, at the age of twenty-one, I left my native land to emigrate to

America, my portraits had already been well spoken of in art-circles, and were also favorably received at the Salon. However, I was constantly dreaming of glory awaiting me in the New World, and of the rapid fortune I would make there. My friends tried to dissuade me, but I was impatient and headstrong. So, one pleasant morning in autumn, I packed my trunk, went by rail to Havre, and from there by steamer to New York, arriving at the last-named city Sept. 27, 1873, exactly a week after the financial panic. Having left Paris contrary to the wishes and without the consent of my uncle, the strict and exacting old gentleman withdrew his assistance from me, thus throwing me entirely upon my own resources. Being told by a friend that in this country a great deal of an artist's success depended on making a proper show, and having saved a small sum of money before leaving Paris, I hired a furnished room in a fashionable boarding-house, and opened a studio on Twenty-third Street, opposite the Academy of Design. Alas! I could not have started out at a worse time; for the richest people in New York then felt poor, and no one was able to calculate the consequences which the increasing want of confidence in commercial circles might produce. I had visitors enough at my studio, and occasionally received an order for a portrait; but the scant patronage extended to me was not even sufficient to meet my daily expenses. Hardly two months had elapsed, when my limited means were nearly exhausted, and starvation was staring me boldly in the face. From day to day, and from week to week, I had hoped that the times might

improve, and matters begin to look brighter. But I hoped in vain; for things were growing worse and worse every day; and, after three months of hard struggle, I was at last obliged to abandon my studio and my boarding-house on the same day; and, looking for cheaper quarters, I found and hired a room on the fifth floor of a tenement-house in Thirty-fourth Street, thus relinquishing all my claim to the patronage of the fashionable world. Having always had at my command sufficient means to enjoy the comforts of life, the sudden change in my circumstances made me despondent; and, while almost every one around me seemed joyful and happy during the Christmas holidays, I was wandering through the streets of New York, trying to find the most liberal pawnbroker, to advance me a small sum of money on the pledge of a valuable ring; and, when the New Year's Day at last arrived, I found myself almost penniless, and minus all my valuables, save my watch and chain, an inheritance from my father, with which treasure I resolved never to part. I well remember now the cold and cheerless New Year's morning, nor shall I ever forget it. I arose at eight o'clock: but, finding my room bitter cold, I went to bed once more; and, pulling the scant bed-cover over my head, I endeavored to sleep again, in order to forget my misery. But in vain! My mind was too much occupied with thoughts of the dark future; and therefore, half an hour later, I arose for the second time, and commenced dressing myself. When I came to the washstand, I found that the water in the pitcher was frozen; and, in trying to break the ice with my tooth-

brush, I broke the brush, but not the ice. Small as the loss was in itself, I could have cried over it. I had brought the brush from home. It was the gift of a dear friend, the son of one of my patrons in Paris, who had shown me a great deal of kindness. My thoughts now wandered to my young friend and to the scenes of happier days. In imagination I saw him in his stylish equipage, dressed in the height of fashion, starting out from his palace-like mansion at the Faubourg St. Germain, to call on his favorite lady friends, lovely creatures, to most of whom I had been introduced by him. Oh, what a dreadful change had taken place with me in those few months. In the street below I noticed a merry crowd of pleasure-seekers and idlers; at the door an Italian organ-grinder was playing a lively air from the opera "Ernani;" and on the fifth floor of a tenement was I, cold, hungry, and sad. God pity the poor! My thoughts were now wandering away from my young friend to the home of my rich uncle in the West Indies. I imagined a portly old gentleman, with gray hair and a stern face, sitting in his easy-chair, surrounded by wealth and elegance, smoking a costly cigar, while giving orders to the overseer of his large plantation, but never, even for a moment, thinking of his poor, unfortunate nephew. Yes, dear reader, at that time I was poor and unfortunate; but, thanks to God, poverty had not degraded me. I was as neat and clean about my person, and as particular about my dress, as in the days of my prosperity. I would never sit down to my breakfast before I had shaved myself. That day, prompted by a feeling of economy, or

rather by a feeling of necessity, I resolved to take only one meal, — that was dinner; but nevertheless I prepared to shave as usual. Taking a small hand-mirror from the table, I was almost frightened at my haggard face and deathly color. I had just finished my toilet, when I heard heavy footsteps on the stairway; and a few moments afterwards, nervous and weak as I was, I was frightened by a loud rap at my door. Having been ashamed to give my address to my friends or patrons, I now took it for granted that the party outside had mistaken the door, and therefore I took no notice of it. A few moments of silence and suspense on my part elapsed; and then a louder and more impatient rap, and the calling of my name, convinced me, that, after all, the unexpected visitor was in search of me. Having a clear conscience, I now quickly opened the door, and was greatly surprised to behold one of my few patrons of Twenty-third Street. I was so confused and embarrassed, that I neglected to wish him a happy new year, and even omitted to offer him a seat. Fortunately he did not take offense at my great oversight; but, seating himself on the solitary wooden chair, he beckoned me to be seated also, which I did by sitting down on my trunk, there being no other seat in the room. Before I proceed with my story, I will give you a little description of my visitor. He was a fine-looking, stoutly-built gentleman, of middling height, in the prime of life, aged perhaps forty. He had a round face, without beard, healthy complexion, brown hair, and dark blue eyes. He was natural and unrestrained in his movements, and quick

of speech. He wore a black beaver overcoat, trimmed with fur, and a fur cap to match, and carried a black ebony cane, mounted with a gold top. After surveying me from head to foot, seemingly pleased with my outward appearance, he addressed me as follows: "Of course you must be surprised to see me here this morning. I have come to say a few words to you; and, seeing that you have been preparing to go out, I will not detain you any longer than necessary. There was a time, not many years ago, when I was as poor as you are now: but for the last ten years fortune has smiled upon me; and although I have accumulated a great deal of wealth, thank Heaven! I have done it in an honest way, and my heart has remained in the right spot. Having always trusted in God, and feeling that for the blessings bestowed on me I am indebted to him, and to him alone, I have to a certain extent become a philanthropist. As such, it has been my custom for several years past annually to set aside the sum of five hundred dollars for New Year's presents; three hundred dollars thereof, divided into three equal parts of one hundred dollars each, to be distributed by myself between three needy families or individuals, and the balance of two hundred dollars to be donated by my wife for similar purposes at her own option. Now, let me say to you, that almost from the day on which you opened your studio in Twenty-third Street, I have watched your movements, and, without flattering you, have been greatly pleased with your honest efforts to succeed; and I am sure that you are worthy of the encouragement and patronage which you failed

to receive. On passing through Twenty-third Street the other day, I was surprised to see a cart loaded with your personal property, which I recognized by a portrait which I had one day seen at your room. On inquiry, I ascertained from the carman your present address; and, making a memorandum of the street and number of this house, I resolved to give you a call. This morning on opening my wallet, to count out the money for New Year's gifts, it so happened that this memorandum dropped from it; and, taking the hint as sent from Heaven, I at once determined to call on you first; and here I am. In offering you one hundred dollars of the donation money, I feel sure that I could not have selected one more needy or more worthy of assistance; nor do I feel as if I were conferring a great favor upon you, but merely that I am paying off a debt which I owe to God. In accepting it, you will therefore please to consider it merely a loan, which in fact it only is, as you will see by the receipt which I shall ask you to sign, and which reads as follows:—

"\$100.00

NEW YORK, Jan. 1, 1874.

"Received from the hands of Providence the sum of one hundred dollars, lawful money of the United States of America, to be considered by me as a loan, and to be paid over by me as soon as convenient, with interest at the rate of six per cent per annum, to such person or persons as in my judgment, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, I shall deem most needy and most worthy of assistance.

"Now, if you will be kind enough to sign this receipt, with your full name and address, I will deliver to you the money at once."

So saying, he handed me the document, while I was puzzling my confused brains to decide whether this was a dream or reality. Holding the paper in my hands, I felt tears forcing themselves to my eyes, my heart was overflowing with emotion, yet I was unable to speak. For a few moments I was dumbfounded; and then, finding relief in a flood of tears, I sprang from my seat, knelt down at the feet of my benefactor, and, moistening his hands with tears, I kissed them in reverence. I did not look into his face, but from the quiver of his hand I knew that he also was much agitated. He being a man of the world, however, and soon mastering his feelings, he said in a mild but firm tone, —

“You had better kneel before God than before man, my young friend;” and, assisting me to rise, he begged me to be expeditious, as he had already remained longer than his time permitted.

Taking pen and ink from the mantel-piece, I said, “I will accept the money as a loan from God; and while I thank you as his chosen messenger for it, I hereby vow to him and to you that I will prove worthy of this great and unexpected blessing.” Saying this, I signed my name and address to the receipt with trembling hand; while my noble-hearted friend counted out one hundred dollars, and, placing them on the table, hastily put the receipt in his pocket, shook hands with me, and saying, “Let me hear from you occasionally,” left the room before I had a chance to thank him once more.

It was nearly eleven o'clock that morning when he left me; and not having partaken of food since five

o'clock of the previous day, I felt very weak and exhausted, and was obliged to lie down for a few moments. I closed my eyes, not in sleep, but in prayer; and I felt that my unuttered words of gratitude went silently to Heaven. God always has been kind to me, and men have been kind to me also. The immortal Peabody is no more; but there are many other philanthropists still living, whose noble deeds are hidden from view by the cloak of modesty, and only occasionally are brought to light by the grateful recipients of their benevolence. Let us always trust in God, and never lose our faith in mankind!

Dear reader, as I have told you, I am a Frenchman, but not one of the easy-minded kind. That day was a universal holiday. I had one hundred and three dollars and seventy-five cents in my pocket; yet I indulged only in a very frugal meal, and afterwards took a walk up Broadway. How different things appeared to me then! I once more enjoyed the general happiness which seemed to be reflected on every face, while in the morning the merriment of the crowd only annoyed and disgusted me. Again I say, God pity the poor, who have no heart to smile, nor cause for joy, but only tears of sorrow and regret! When I returned to my room, at dark, I sent for some fuel; and, after starting a fire in the stove, I sat down easy and contented in mind, and light at heart. Thanks to the disinterested generosity of my friend, the wolf had been driven from the door; and with my temperate habits, even should I not find employment soon, I could live at least two months free from care and

suffering. The next day I went to the house of my benefactor; and, after thanking him once more for his great kindness, I consulted him as to the steps I was now to take, since my circumstances had been so favorably changed by his timely assistance.

"If I were you, I would try my luck in Washington," said he: "if you succeed in gaining a reputation there, your fortune will be made. You may have to travel a hard road at first; but you are young and persevering, and your talent as a portrait-painter can not be denied. Your style reminds me very much of Elliot's. He is now dead; but his works of art are still in existence, and will for ever live in the memory of connoisseurs. There is nothing like trying, my young friend."

I myself had thought of Washington before, and I was pleased to hear him suggest that place. Five days afterwards I opened a studio in F Street, in the aforesaid city, full of hope and anticipation.

I placed a life-size portrait, with my card, in the show-window of the leading book-store, and another one in the most prominent music-store, and then patiently awaited patronage. But that was slow in coming. A month had passed and I had only received three small orders, which came to me indirectly through an art-dealer, and therefore were not very remunerative. I then made applications at several photographic galleries, soliciting orders to color photographs; but I was told that most of their pictures were finished in water-colors, and only a few were finished in oil. I had never worked in water-colors, and could not venture at it now; and in this

way I found but little encouragement from photographers. Ten weeks had passed since the never-to-be-forgotten New Year's Day, and my little fortune had dwindled down to a few paltry dollars; and once more starvation was staring me in the face, when one gloomy morning, while looking out the window, I noticed an elegant carriage driving up to the door; and five minutes afterwards a portly lady of commanding features, dressed in deep mourning, entered my studio. Feeling that moment so miserably poor, I think the contrast between wealth and poverty must have struck me so forcibly at her sudden and unexpected appearance, that, contrary to my habit, I was now humbly bowing to her for the third time, while I was unable to utter a single word. The lady, seeing my embarrassment, soon relieved me from it, by saying, —

“I need not ask you whether you are the party I desire to see. Your pale face and haggard form denote the artist, so let me tell you my errand at once. With your permission I will take the easy-chair. Please be seated yourself, and I will proceed to business. I want to get a life-size portrait painted by you, not of myself, but of my husband, who died very suddenly a week ago. He was once a member of Congress from Louisiana, and ever since that time we have generally spent the winter in this city. Some weeks ago my husband spoke to me about a very fine portrait, exhibited in a show-window on the avenue, saying that he had become acquainted with the artist, creditably mentioning your name. My husband was a very unassuming person, and always

objected to sitting for a portrait; and therefore unfortunately we possess no picture of him, except a small card-photograph, nearly defaced. You, having known him in life, might be the most suitable, and perhaps the only artist able to succeed in making a good likeness from this photograph, aided by your recollections of my husband. Money is no object to me; and I would consider five hundred dollars but a fair compensation for your services, in case you should succeed, and would be willing to pay you more than this if you desired. I have come here to ascertain whether you are willing to undertake the difficult task or not."

Here she paused, looking at me inquiringly. So far she had not given me the slightest chance to speak; but now she was impatiently awaiting my reply, which I made by saying, —

"I thank you, madam, for the confidence you so kindly place in me. I am ready and willing to undertake the work; and, with God's aid, I hope to succeed."

"Very well," she said, rising: "here is the card-picture, and here is my address. I will call on you again in a week from to-day. Should you desire to see me in the mean time, you are welcome to call on me." So saying, she left the room. Can you guess what my thoughts were after the lady had left me? Again I recognized the hand of Providence, ready to rescue me from despair. I felt that I must lose no time. My credit was still good at the store where I bought my materials, having promptly paid my bills at the end of each month. So I procured

canvas and a few other articles, and commenced the drawing of the portrait on the same day. Examining the card-picture, I was grieved to find that a yellow spot, apparently caused by some chemical defect, defaced the mouth so much that I could only guess at its probable shape. Having seen the deceased only twice, my memory failed me in remembering the lines of the lower part of his face, while the expression of his sparkling eyes and the shape of his classic nose still lingered fresh in my mind. The next day I commenced to paint. In a few more days I had finished the upper part of the face, as I thought to perfection. Regarding the shape of the mouth, I could learn nothing from the photograph. I was undecided and timid about finishing it; and, after changing it several times, I was at last obliged to complete the picture a day before I expected a second call from the lady. She came, as promised, exactly a week after I had received her order. Need I tell you that I felt very nervous when she entered my room? My whole future, my welfare, nay, even more, my life or death perhaps, depended on my success or my failure. She moved a chair in front of the portrait, seated herself, adjusted her gold eye-glasses, and began examining my work closely, while I stood behind her chair, anxiously awaiting her criticism. Nearly ten minutes had passed, when at last she spoke as follows:—

“You have succeeded admirably with the greater part of the picture; and I think that the forehead, the eyes, and the nose can not be improved. The hair ought to be much grayer than you have painted

it; but, as I possess a lock of my husband's hair, this can be easily remedied. The expression of this mouth, however, is entirely unlike his own, nor can I describe to you wherein the difference consists. I regret to say, that, unless this can be altered to my satisfaction, the portrait will be utterly useless to me; yet I still hope that you may succeed. I will call again to-morrow, with my daughter, who perhaps may be able to give you some hints regarding the expression of her father's mouth, and we will bring the lock of hair with us. Good-morning, sir;" and off she went, leaving me in sadness and despair.

Oh! could the proud woman have read my thoughts, she might perhaps have pitied me. For nearly a week past I had lived on one meal per day, and had kept up my courage while feeding on hope. My heart now sank within me. Again I sighed, "God pity the poor!"

The next day mother and daughter called, as promised. The young lady was a startling beauty, a healthy-looking blonde, with dark, expressive eyes, a well-shaped nose, and a pretty little mouth. She was graceful and easy in her manners, and by no means haughty. She, also, was dressed in deep mourning; and, after politely bowing to me, she placed herself behind her mother, who had already seated herself before the picture.

"What do you think of it, Clara?" asked the elder lady.

"I think if the mouth would show a little more of a smile, and be made a trifle larger, it would look more like papa," responded the daughter.

"Perhaps it might," said the mother. "I wish you would try it, anyhow," she continued, addressing me; "and here is the lock of my husband's hair. Please take good care of it. I will see you again the day after to-morrow. Come, come, Clara: you can look at those pictures some other time. You know we have promised to dine at the Arlington. Good-day, sir."

"Good-day, sir," echoed the daughter, while I silently bowed to them. They stepped into the elegant carriage, and drove to the fashionable hotel, while I walked down the avenue to a free lunch in Seventh Street. The next day I altered the mouth as requested; and, after doing so, I commenced, from memory, a portrait of the fair Clara. I had taken a good look at her while she was examining her father's portrait; and I succeeded so remarkably well with her likeness, that I could not have done better even after a dozen sittings of the original. At the same time I resolved not to show this picture to anybody, but to reserve it for some future occasion. Five days after, the rich lady called once more, but alone. This time she seemed to me nervous, impatient, and, I may say, almost unkind. I had altered the color of the hair, and also the expression of the mouth as directed, and really thought that this had greatly improved the whole expression of the face. But the lady did not seem to think so. After seating herself, she first asked for the lock of her husband's hair, and received it from me: she compared it with the painting, and then said in a rather abrupt manner,—

"The hair is all right now, but the expression of

the mouth is even worse than it was before. I am indeed sorry for having put you to all this trouble; but you see yourself, as the picture is now, it is entirely worthless to me. I shall leave Washington in a few days; but I will keep you informed as to my whereabouts, and, if you have any favorable change to report, I shall be glad to hear from you." Rising from her seat, she said, "I wish you a good-morning, sir," not giving me a chance to say a single word to her; and, haughtily bowing to me, she left the room.

Dear reader, — but never mind. I have already, on various occasions, bored you sufficiently by describing my feelings to you. So this time I leave it for you to imagine my thoughts of sadness and despair, and the feeling of indignation at the harsh and heartless treatment I received. The portrait was left on my hands, nearly two weeks' labor was lost, and I now was poorer and unhappier than ever. I verily believe, that, even if I had found patronage that week, I could not have done justice to the work; for my mind was upset, and I was almost demoralized. I had already been obliged to borrow a small sum of money from a friend; and now I was on my way to another acquaintance to ask the same favor. Alas! I had commenced begging. My proud spirit revolted against the idea, but my empty stomach urged the disgraceful act.

Walking down Pennsylvania Avenue that morning, wrapped up in gloomy thoughts, I was suddenly startled from my reveries by the rattling noise of an approaching coach, which drove very near to the sidewalk. Turning round, my quick

eye perceived at the coach-window the face of a gentleman which seemed to be the very counterpart of the fatal portrait which I had attempted to paint. A thought, as if inspired by God, suddenly struck me, that perhaps by taking a good look at the stranger, who looked exactly like the deceased, I might be enabled to alter and finish the unlucky picture to the satisfaction of the rich lady; and for this purpose, running after the coach as fast as I could, I reached the depot of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad a few minutes after the coach had stopped there and the passengers had entered the depot. Nearly out of breath, and greatly excited, I began my search, first in the gentlemen's waiting-room, and then in the ladies' room; but not finding my man there, I hastily jumped on the train,—an express-train to New York, just ready to start,—and, running from one car into another and back again, I felt greatly disappointed and vexed at not finding the object of my search. It then occurred to me that I had not looked into the drawing-room car, nor into the smoking-car yet. So I ran first to the one, and then to the other; but, not being able to detect the party I was looking for, I once more passed hurriedly through all the passenger-cars. In the mean time the train had started from the depot, and was running at full speed, before I was aware of it, rendering it impossible for me to jump off. Seeing my critical position, I reluctantly submitted to my fate by taking a seat; but I was too nervous to remain quiet. No doubt my queer movements and my uneasiness had already attracted the attention, and aroused the curiosity and mistrust, of

many of the passengers; for I saw them stare at me, and whisper to each other. Soon the conductor came around. Approaching me, he asked for my ticket. I told him I had none. He then demanded money, and I made the same reply. He now asked me where I was going, and I told him I did not know; which was the truth. He seemed to get out of patience with me; and noticing this, I foolishly offered him my watch and chain as a pledge for the payment of the fare. He took it; and, after examining the tickets of the other passengers, he left the car. Ten minutes later he returned with a gentleman, to whom he assigned a seat beside me. The stranger, entering into conversation with me, asked various questions, some of which I did not comprehend, while others I did not see fit to answer. Finally he asked for my name; and, when I gave it to him, he coolly asked me if I was not mistaken. This insult aroused in me indignation and contempt; and defiantly asking him what he meant, he sneeringly said, "I mean to arrest you on suspicion." And so he did. At his request the train was stopped at Laurel Station, where he awaited the next southward-bound train, to take me back to Washington. Arriving there, he conducted me to police headquarters, and thence, for want of bail, to a station-house, where I remained a prisoner for the night. As I afterwards learned, a daring burglary had been committed in Washington the same week, in which a Frenchman by the name of Lamartine, who made his escape to parts unknown, was supposed to be implicated. Owing to my strange movements, and probably also to my foreign accent

and appearance, the conductor fancied that I might be the missing criminal; and communicating his suspicions to a detective, who happened to be on the train, I was for a while made the unfortunate victim of a very excusable mistake.

I will not attempt to speak of the wretched night which I spent in close confinement, for words would be inadequate to picture my frame of mind during those long and sleepless hours. Let me merely state, that about nine o'clock the next morning I was taken to police headquarters once more; and, after having been identified by a friend for whom I had sent, I was at last released, and had my watch and chain returned to me. While on my way to my lodgings, it was raining in torrents, and the wind blew fearfully. Arriving at my room, with drenching-wet clothes, I felt chilled through and through, while my aching head was burning like fire. Sinking into an arm-chair, exhausted as I was, I soon fell asleep; and when I at last awoke, late in the afternoon, my lips were parched, and I felt sick and feverish. I had not eaten any thing within the last thirty hours, nor did I care for food now. I felt that I needed rest more than nourishment. Fortunately my sleeping-room was adjoining my studio; and, as I had no means of making a fire in my room, I went to bed. However, I did not sleep much that night; and when occasionally I did, frightful dreams troubled me, in one of which I saw the portrait of the deceased move its eyes, and angrily frown at me. Towards morning I at last fell into a sound sleep, and finally awoke, greatly

refreshed. The weather had changed, and the sun was shining brightly into my room. I felt a craving appetite, but had nothing to satisfy it with, save a few stale crackers and a withered apple, a frugal fare indeed; yet I was thankful to Heaven even for that, as since the memorable New Year's Day I had put all my trust in God. Nor did I look to him in vain: for on the same morning a countryman of mine, having heard of my unjust arrest, called upon me to express his sympathy and regret; and, being informed by me of my helpless position, he voluntarily and disinterestedly offered me assistance, which I conditionally accepted. Two weeks again had passed since the night of my imprisonment; and, although I had made the greatest efforts, I had received but little encouragement, and, as I may well say, was only dragging along my miserable existence, when one afternoon, just before dark, a loud and quickly repeated rap at my door aroused me from my reveries; and a moment afterwards the door was impatiently opened, and, to my indescribable surprise and wonder, the very person for whom I had so eagerly searched on the train stood before me, the very image of the deceased, whose unfinished likeness had caused me so much anxiety and grief. Macbeth himself could not have been more amazed at seeing the ghost of Banquo than I was at beholding this unexpected visitor. Had I been a coward, I might have felt inclined to run out of the room. Had I been a Spiritualist, I might have looked at the apparition as a friendly visitation of the departed Congressman. However, my visitor was any thing but a spirit. He was made

of flesh and blood, and of a good deal of it too, for he must have weighed over two hundred pounds. At his approach I grew nervous and excited, but he took not the slightest notice of it. Looking around the room for a chair, large and strong enough to hold his form, and failing to find one of sufficient dimensions and strength, he seated himself on the lounge, and then, in a rather commanding tone, requested me to take a chair, which I reluctantly did. Then sternly looking at me, he asked, —

“What is your name, sir?”

I gave it to him.

“Born where?” he inquired.

“In Paris,” I answered.

“Parents living?” he asked.

“Both dead,” I replied.

“Any relatives?” he continued.

“An uncle,” I said.

“Kind old gentleman?” he asked.

“Yes, sir; very kind indeed,” I replied.

“You lie, you rascal!” he shouted at the top of his voice. “Your uncle is an old brute; but you will forgive him, my dear boy, won’t you?”

Saying this, the old gentleman quickly arose; and, putting his huge arms around my neck, he patted me on the back as if I were a child; and, while his tears were trickling on my neck, he told me in a tender tone that he was my mother’s brother, my uncle from the West Indies. Imagine my astonishment and delight on hearing this startling news. Again I recognized the hand of Providence in it. After we had both become composed, he told me that he had accu-

mulated great wealth: but, having never been married, he had for many years past led a solitary and unhappy life; and that long since he had contemplated returning to France, where he hoped to find in me, who was his nearest relative, an agreeable companion and friend. He furthermore told me, that my unexpected and uncalled for removal to America, contrary to his wish and without his consent, had so much disappointed and aggravated him, that in a fit of anger he withdrew his assistance from me, but that this unkindness on his part had so troubled his mind, that he sold his large estate, and came to New York in search of me. Finding that I had left for Washington, he followed me there, but was unable to ascertain my address. He also told me that he had twice gone back and forth from New York to Washington without finding me; and that, on returning to New York the last time, he had felt in such ill-humor, that he secluded himself by taking a full compartment in the sleeping-car, and by retiring in daytime under the pretense of being ill, which accounted for my not being able to find him on the train on the fatal day of my arrest. Returning to Washington for the third time, he had only this afternoon, by accident, noticed in the show-window of a music-store on Pennsylvania Avenue a portrait, bearing a card with my name and address, whereby he had at last succeeded in finding me, and that now he was determined never to part from me.

On examining my works of art, he expressed himself highly pleased with my talent, but was puzzled to understand how I could have attempted to paint

his portrait, without ever having seen him or his likeness. I rather astonished him by saying, that the portrait was not intended to represent him, but that it was the picture of a deceased Congressman, who had looked in life very much like himself. To illustrate the matter, I showed him the card-photograph, and related to him the circumstances connected with the unfinished portrait. The next day he volunteered to give me a sitting; and, as the lower part of *his* face bore exactly the same happy expression as that of the deceased, I was enabled to finish the likeness to my own satisfaction, and now felt sure that the haughty widow would be pleased with my success, and deem me worthy of the liberal compensation offered by her.

As luck would have it, four days afterwards I received a letter of inquiry, dated at New Orleans, from the lady herself, requesting an immediate answer. I instantly telegraphed to her the following words: "Portrait finished: where shall I send it?" The same day I received an answer by telegraph from her, which read: "Keep it. Will be in Washington within a week." Six days afterwards I was delighted at seeing her and her daughter enter my studio. This time she had hardly seated herself, when she exclaimed: "Excellent: the likeness could not be any better. Oh! I am ever so much indebted to you. How could you do it so well?" I told her the miraculous way in which I had succeeded; and she seemed greatly surprised to hear it, and listened very attentively to my strange story. My uncle happened to be out at the time; and I was heartily glad of it,

for his wonderful resemblance to her husband might have been unpleasant to her.

The next day the lady and her daughter called again; and after handing me a check for five hundred dollars, and presenting me with a valuable diamond ring, the widow gave me directions where to send the picture. Before leaving my room, she expressed a desire to have her own portrait and that of her daughter painted by me. When I informed her that the latter portrait was already finished, a haughty look of displeasure spread over her face; but when, reading her thoughts, I quickly added, "I painted it from memory," she seemed relieved, and smilingly said, "Ah! I understand." Turning a picture, which had been facing the wall, I now exhibited the portrait. At seeing the striking likeness of herself, the young lady blushing said, "I do not see how you could have remembered my features so well." And to tell you the truth, dear reader, at that time I did not know myself how I could have succeeded so well; but, when I think of it now, I feel sure that I must have looked at her with the eyes of love; for, although only two years have elapsed, the lovely Clara has become my darling wife. And as the rich widow has seen fit to unite her wealth and her fate with that of my uncle, by accepting his hand and heart, we have all moved to Paris; and, if you should ever visit France, we will be happy to have you call on us. As I have gained some celebrity among American residents at Paris, by having painted and exhibited a life-size picture of the immortal George Washington, you will have no trouble in finding me; and I promise

to treat you well, for now I am rich and happy, owing my good fortune partly to the portrait of the deceased. And, if you are anxious to know how I disposed of the providential loan, I will take you to one of the best regulated charitable institutions in Paris, of which my dear wife and myself are the happy founders and managers.

And now, dear reader, good-by. Think of me kindly. Trust in God, and do not lose your faith in mankind. Do all the good you can, and you will be blessed yourself.

THE MYSTERIOUS CALL.

"HAVE you ever heard of mysterious calls?" inquired a friend of me the other day.

"Why do you ask me that question?" said I.

"Because I know of an occurrence of that kind which would make a tip-top story for your book," replied my friend.

"Will you write it down for me as it really happened?" asked I smilingly. "If so, I will have it printed, and you may claim the authorship."

"All right: I will do it," said my friend.

A week afterwards he brought me a nicely written document, of which the following is a true copy:—

If ever there lived a truthful person, it was my mother's sister, my aunt Mary. She would no more think of telling a lie than of putting her right-hand glove on the fingers of her left. In her eyes falsehoods were not excusable under any pretense; and in that respect she was particularly severe on us children, who, as she lived at my parents' house in Catskill, were in a certain measure under her control, my mother having been made an invalid from the effects of a heavy fall on the ice. Even an innocent April joke would not be accepted by her; and when, on such an occasion, I once told her that her pet kitten

had fallen from the window into the yard and had been killed, the poor woman, believing me to be sincere, nearly fainted; and after I myself had told her that my information was merely intended for an April joke, it took her nearly a year before she could forgive me for having told what she called a wicked lie; and I doubt very much, although she lived many years afterwards, whether I ever regained her full confidence.

Now, this very aunt of mine was as free from superstition as any enlightened mind could be; and although the neighborhood in which we lived was connected with strange legends of the past, aunt Mary would always insist that she believed nothing except what she saw with her own eyes and heard with her own ears; and she always tried to drive all fear out of us children. At her suggestion we were ordered to go to bed without a light; and, as our sleeping-rooms were on the third floor, we had to ascend two dark stairways, and pass through two dark halls, to reach them. Being taught to be orderly, we had no trouble in finding any thing we wanted in the dark; and, if either of us had been asked to go through a graveyard at night, we would have complied with the request without a moment's hesitation.

Now, after what I have told you of my aunt Mary, and of the moral influence she exercised over us, you may perhaps be surprised to learn, that, after all, the good old lady, during the latter part of her natural life, once had occasion to waver in her strong belief that we poor mortals never experienced any thing supernatural, and that all apparently mysterious occurrences could be traced back to natural causes.

Never shall I forget what I heard one night from her own lips, although many years have elapsed since then. At the age of thirteen, I had a very severe attack of scarlet fever, and required constant attention from my mother or my aunt. For the sake of convenience I had been removed to a spare room on the second floor, where I lay confined to my bed for nearly four weeks. After getting through with their household work, my mother and my aunt usually met at my room at about eight o'clock in the evening, to do a little sewing, to talk about family matters and upon the topics of the day. At nine o'clock one of them would hand me the last spoonful of medicine for the night, after which I generally fell asleep. One night, however, I felt very restless, and, contrary to my custom, kept awake long after the usual hour. Prompted by a feeling of childish curiosity, I resolved to feign sleep, in order to hear what the women would talk about when left to themselves. So about ten o'clock I closed my eyes, and soon afterward pretended to be fast asleep. My mother came to my bedside to arrange the covers. Returning to her seat, I heard her say, "He seems to have a little fever to-night, but he has gone to sleep at last."

"I am heartily glad of it," replied my aunt; "for I have been wishing to speak to you since morning, and felt greatly annoyed when our unexpected guests came this noon. Something very strange has happened to me; and I am anxious to learn how you would account for it, although I know beforehand what you will say, as you believe in all sorts of mysterious things."

"Perhaps I have more reason for it than you," said my mother; "but pray let me hear what has happened to you, as you have already aroused my curiosity."

"Well, then," continued my aunt, "late last night, after having gone to my room, I imagined I smelled something burning. So I went down stairs into the kitchen to satisfy myself about the matter; but not finding any smoke below, I thought I might as well go all the way up stairs, which I did, discovering nothing, however. Returning to my room, I went to the window, and was just thinking what a beautiful, clear night it was, when I saw a brilliant star fall suddenly from the sky; and at the same moment I heard a familiar voice, which seemed to be right behind me, call my name three times, 'Mary, Mary, Mary!' You know I am not superstitious, nor am I easily frightened; but this was a little too much for me, and I can assure you that I turned round quick enough. Seeing nobody behind me, and having locked and bolted the door after I had entered my room, I did not know what to think of it. Looking first under the bed, then into the closet, and afterwards into the wardrobe, I made sure that I was alone. I did not sleep a wink last night, and have felt worried and uneasy ever since. You know brother James was to start from New York on his trip to Europe last Monday, and I fear that he has sailed and been lost at sea. I shall not have a happy moment until we hear from him."

"God forbid that your fears should prove true!" said my mother. "You have made me so nervous

that I can not sew another stitch to-night. What strange things will happen ! ”

You may easily imagine how *I* felt on hearing this exciting story from the lips of my truthful aunt. My heart was beating like a sledge-hammer, and heavy sweat-drops were running from my brow. Making believe that I had just awoke, I called my aunt, asking her to give me a drink, which she did. Returning to her seat, I heard her whisper to my mother, “I hope he has not heard what I said.”

It took me a good while before I fell asleep again that night, but at last I did. For two days I did not hear any more of the matter, until one morning, while my aunt was sitting near my bedside engaged in reading the morning news, my mother hastily entered the room, and, addressing her sister, said, —

“Mary, I have startling news for you ! ”

I saw my aunt drop the newspaper on the floor, and turn deathly pale, while my mother continued, “I have just received a letter from brother James. Listen to what he writes.” And then she read the letter, which was as follows : —

“DEAR SISTER, — Undoubtedly you have ere now fancied me drifting on the raging sea; but I am still in New York, as our vessel will not sail until next week. The night before last I took a notion to run up to Catskill by the evening train, with the intention of surprising you. Our train was behind time, and it was near midnight when I reached the house. Still carrying my night-key in my pocket, I got in easily; but after entering the house, I found, to my great regret, that you had all retired. Noticing a light in Mary’s room, I went to her door, and called her three times through the keyhole; but not receiv-

ing an answer from her, I took it for granted that she had fallen asleep. As I had to return to New York at six o'clock the next morning, I preferred not to disturb you. So I went over to the hotel, and slept there for the balance of the night.

"If nothing happens to prevent me, I will be with you next Sunday. Give my love to all.

"Your affectionate brother,

"JAMES."

"Thank Heaven that he is all right!" exclaimed my aunt. "*That fully explains the mysterious call.*"

A DETECTIVE'S STORY.

THE firm of Chappelleaux Frères & Co., Importers of Watches and Jewelry, formerly at No. —, Maiden Lane, New York, on taking account of stock in the early part of January, 1858, found that a large number of fine gold watches, whose value was estimated at over eighteen thousand dollars, were missing.

Suspicion immediately fell upon one of their confidential clerks, one Robert Lasalle, a Frenchman, who, while receiving a salary of only one thousand dollars per annum, was known to live in an extravagant manner. At the time above stated, he had been married about a year, his wife belonging to a Quaker family in Philadelphia. On the day when the discovery was made, Lasalle was absent from the office on a collecting tour through the upper part of the city, a duty devolving upon him on the last day of each week. The discovery was made by the senior member of the firm, who, being an experienced business man, deemed it advisable to confide his secret to nobody except his two partners; and, after a short consultation with them, he started for police headquarters. Having stated his grievances and suspicions to the chief of police, and having offered a reward of two thousand dollars for the detection of the

thief, he gave a full description of Lasalle's person and dress, in substance as follows :—

Age, about thirty; height, about five feet eight; complexion, healthy; face, oval and prepossessing; nose, straight and well-shaped; eyes, hair, and moustache, black; weight, about one hundred and sixty; movements, quick and graceful; language, select, with foreign accent when speaking English. Dress as follows: Black diagonal-cloth coat and vest, black and gray striped pants, blue beaver overcoat, polka-dotted black satin scarf, with scarfpin representing a gold hand holding a large pearl, fur cap, and fur gloves.

Mr. Chapelleaux also stated that Lasalle and his wife boarded at No. —, Waverley Place.

On receiving the above particulars, the chief of police forthwith placed the matter in the hands of John Rogers and James Donahoe, two very shrewd and experienced detectives. To the last-named gentleman, whose acquaintance I accidentally made at the house of a friend, I am indebted for the following story, which he told me in his own peculiar style, as follows :—

It was about noontime of a clear, cold day, when the chief told me what was the matter. I talked it over with Rogers, and we soon devised a plan of our own how to operate. Rogers was to act as a shadow to watch Lasalle's movements when outdoors, and I was to take a room at the house where Lasalle and his wife boarded. So I went home to get my valise, and to dress up in my Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes,

knowing that I had to deal with a fine bird. Then I took a hasty lunch, and told the old woman that I had to board in a fashionable neighborhood for a while; which did not at all surprise her, as I had been on the police a good many years, and we had been married long enough for her to get used to my strange life. She knew very well what was up, and smilingly said, "All right Jim; only take care that you do not fall in love with a rich woman."

"No fear," said I, leaving the house. I then went to No. —, Waverley Place, at that time occupied by a German lady, one Mrs. Moller. On ringing the bell at two o'clock in the afternoon, a colored boy about fifteen years old opened the door, and asked me what I wanted. I told him that I wanted to see the lady of the house: whereupon he stated that his mistress was just dressing to go out; but, if I waited about ten minutes, I might be able to see her. And, after ushering me into the front-parlor, he went up stairs to announce me. While waiting, I looked at the elegant furniture, the rich carpet, the fine pictures and ornaments, and made up my mind that this was not the worst place to live in; and if the fare was only as good as the rest of the things, and if sour-kROUT was not served up more than seven times a week, I could stand it a little while. I was just rehearsing in my mind how to approach Mrs. Moller, when the lady herself made her appearance, a slender blonde, with blue eyes, pale face, and suffering expression, dressed in deep mourning. Arising to bow to her, she begged me to keep my seat; and then seating herself, she politely said, —

"What can I do for you, sir?"

"I wish to hire a room, with breakfast and supper," replied I. "Can you accommodate me?"

"I can give you a comfortable room on the third floor, the only one now vacant; but we serve no supper. We have breakfast from seven to ten, lunch from twelve to two, and dinner from six to eight," said Mrs. Moller.

"What would be the price for the room you speak of, including full board?" asked I.

"Forty dollars per month, payable weekly," answered the lady.

I thought her charges pretty steep, for at that time war-prices had not yet been imposed upon the community; but, as I had not to pay my expenses, I was not so very particular. She then called the colored boy to show me the room, which I found as she had represented it. Returning to the parlor, she asked if it suited me, and if I had concluded to hire it.

I told her that I would make it answer, although I would have preferred a room on the second floor.

"I am very sorry that I can not accommodate you; but the best part of the second floor is taken up by a wealthy French gentleman and his wife, who pay me one hundred and fifty dollars per month for a suite of rooms, with full board. The gentleman, who is a partner in the firm of Chapelleaux Frères & Co., boarded with me four years before his marriage, which occurred a year ago last Christmas. His wife is a very fine young lady from Philadelphia. After the wedding he brought her here, where they have since remained," remarked Mrs. Moller.

You may easily imagine how attentively I listened to the voluntary statement of the lady, in which, unbeknown to her, I was so deeply interested. It was clear that Lasalle was living greatly beyond his means; and, in order to blind the eyes of those who came in daily contact with him, he was obliged to make misrepresentations regarding his income and position.

"How many boarders have you besides the two you mentioned?" inquired I.

"I generally have from fifteen to twenty; and I can assure you it is a very difficult task, as I am not very strong, and help is so very unreliable. I generally keep three servants, — a cook, a chambermaid, and a bell-boy; but, after all, I have to do the best part of the work myself. For the last two days I have had to do all the chamber-work, as I was obliged to discharge my girl last Thursday, on account of dishonesty. She is the third I have had to dismiss for robbing me. I have no faith in any of them. This afternoon I shall go to an intelligence office in First Street, near the Bowery, and try to get a decent German girl, even if she is a greenhorn," said Mrs. Moller.

"I think you act wisely in doing so," said I. Then, taking out my wallet from my breast pocket, I handed Mrs. Moller ten dollars, saying, "I always pay my board in advance. Please give me a receipt for the money. My name is Frank Henderson. I have formerly lived in Boston, but can give you plenty of city references if you desire it."

"Oh, never mind!" said the lady: "that is all right; I shall not require any."

Mrs. Moller gave me the receipt ; and after requesting her to have my valise sent up to my room, and a fire built, I left the house, highly elated on account of the information I had received regarding Lasalle, but still more pleased with Mrs. Moller's statement about the servants. Her talk could not have suited my purposes any better. When she declared her intention to hire a German girl, it instantly occurred to me, that, unbeknown to her, she must be furnished by *us* with such a servant, as in this case it would be much easier for me to gain access to Lasalle's rooms. Rogers and myself had made an appointment to meet at headquarters at four o'clock in the afternoon, and we both were punctual. In the year in which this robbery took place, very little was as yet known of female detectives ; still there were two women in the service, — one an elderly American lady ; and the other an intelligent young German girl, of fine appearance and good address. The name of the last was Lisette Bremer. She was shrewd and reliable, and would be the very person to aid us in this matter. The boss happened to be in his office. I reported to him what I had done, and what I had heard in Waverley Place about Lasalle's pretended wealth, and that I perhaps had an opportunity to furnish Mrs. Moller with a servant in the person of Miss Bremer. He seemed pleased, and said, —

“ You have made a good beginning. Go on with the matter, Jim. I need not tell an old coon like you what to do, only do not run up expenses too high.”

“ No fear,” said I, leaving the office.

I then went to Lisette Bremer. She lived on the fourth floor of a tenement-house in Third Street, near Avenue B. I found her at her room, engaged in knitting blue woolen stockings of enormous dimensions.

After shaking hands with her, and seating myself opposite her, I told her my errand. I directed her to put on her waiting-girl disguise suit, go right away to the intelligence office in First Street, and apply for a situation as a chambermaid in a German family, then come back immediately, and report to me what her prospects were in getting such employment.

She dressed in ten minutes, and started off precisely at five o'clock, while I staid at her room to await her return. Half an hour later she came back, to tell me, that, when she made the application, she was told by Mrs. Lohmann, the lady who kept the intelligence office, that only five minutes before a very fine German lady had asked her to procure a good German girl to do housework. The lady could not be two blocks off; and she, Mrs. Lohmann, would send her boy after her, and ask her to come back for a moment. The boy ran as fast as he could, and overtook her at the corner of Bond Street and the Bowery. The lady, who happened to be Mrs. Moller, gladly came back to the intelligence office, saw Lisette, had a short talk with her, seemed to take a liking to her, and finally made a bargain with her to come right away. Lisette promised to be at Waverley Place at eight o'clock the same evening. You may imagine how gladly I received the welcome news

from Miss Bremer. Things seemed to go on swimmingly. Not five hours had elapsed since the case was placed in my hands, and I had already accomplished a great deal. Not only was I comfortably quartered on the battle-ground, but I also had a good and reliable assistant in the person of Lisette Bremer. Never before had I made such rapid progress in so short a space of time; and all this was accomplished by acting on the impulse of the moment. So much for being quick-witted, said I to myself. I now returned to my room in Waverley Place; and at six o'clock, having been summoned by the dinner-bell, I went down stairs to the dining-hall. The table was elegantly set for about twenty, but the boarders had not all made their appearance yet. Only ten ladies and four gentlemen were present. Lasalle and his wife had not come in yet. There was a good deal of style about the company; for they all appeared in full dress, and their combined perfumes of musk, jockey-club, patchouli, and Heaven knows what else, almost spoiled my appetite. I was for a while kept in suspense; for nearly all the guests had assembled, the second course was being served, the conversation had become more animated, but Lasalle and lady were still absent. The colored boy was just removing the plates and dishes for the second time, when I heard a loud and merry laugh in the entry; and a few moments afterwards Venus and Adonis, — nay, I beg your pardon, I mean to say, Mr. and Mrs. Lasalle, — arm in arm entered the room. I was startled; for I must confess that I never saw a handsomer nor a happier-looking couple than they

were. She was not quite as tall as he, but beautifully built. Imagine a handsome brunette, with a healthy complexion, an eagle nose, a sparkling, dark eye, a sweet little mouth with a pleasant smile, and you see Mrs. Lasalle. She looked more like an Italian beauty, or a pretty Jewess, than a Quaker lady. There was a certain grace visible in her, which is natural only to persons of good breeding, and which stamps nobility on their brow. Their seats were at the head of the table, and they seemed the center of attraction. After they were seated, Lasalle said, —

“Ladies and gentlemen, I hope you are all in the best of health and spirits on this beautiful day. Mrs. Moller, my better half and myself once more crave your pardon for being a little late at the table. Mr. Goodrich, how was business with you to-day? Pretty good, you say? Well, I am glad to hear it. Have you heard of the gigantic bank robbery in St. Louis, and the flight of the cashier? All these calamities are caused by people living beyond their means.”

And so he went on in that easy way of talking, having something to say to almost every one of the company. Suddenly his eyes rested on me; and, turning to our hostess, he said, —

“Mrs. Moller, my dear lady! I perceive a stranger at the table. Has the gentleman been introduced yet?”

Mrs. Moller blushed, and then said, —

“Ladies and gentlemen, I hope you will pardon the oversight on my part. This is Mr. Henderson, from Boston.”

"Thank you, madam," said Lasalle; and then, turning towards me, he continued, —

"Mr. Henderson, as one of the earliest patrons of Mrs. Moller, permit me to welcome you in behalf of all to our happy household; and here is to our better acquaintance," said he, emptying a glass of claret, of which he had been drinking.

"Thank you, sir; thank you," said I, — thinking if he only knew to whom he was speaking, he might not be so glad to become better acquainted with me.

After dinner I went up stairs to my room; and, accidentally looking out of the window, I noticed a livery coach drive up to the door; and, ten minutes later, Mr. and Mrs. Lasalle, dressed for the opera, stepped into the carriage, and drove off. The next day was Sunday; and the breakfast-hours on that day were from eight to half-past nine. I did not much care to see Lasalle again at the table; and rightly judging, that, having been out late on the previous night, he would surely sleep long, I went to my breakfast very early, and thus succeeded in evading him. Half an hour later I heard his melodious voice and his merry laugh on the stairway; and at ten o'clock I once more saw him and his wife enter a carriage which had come to take them to church. It appeared that I had taken quarters in a good and pious house; for all the inmates seemed to be church-members, even Mrs. Moller. Things were apparently all working in my favor.

Lisette Bremer had arrived, and had been duly installed as chambermaid on the previous night, and accordingly had entered upon her duties. My time

to act had arrived sooner than I expected. The last boarder, an elderly gentleman, had just left the house, when I heard Lisette in the hall of the third floor. I opened my door; and, satisfying myself that no one was near, I whispered to her, —

“Put Lasalle’s rooms in order instantly.”

She nodded her head, and obeyed orders. After twenty minutes she had finished her work, and I slipped noiselessly into the lower hall, and then into Lasalle’s apartments — bolting the door carefully, and darkening the keyholes after I had entered. I commenced my work by examining every thing that stood on the shelves in the closets; but my eyes met nothing to arouse my suspicions. I then went to the bureau, which had four large and three small drawers, containing mostly her and his underwear, three white vests, several dozen of white and colored kid gloves, cuffs, collars, laces, three valuable fans, two elegant opera-glasses, a variety of silk scarfs, neckties, and ribbons, four parasols, all differing in color and design, and numerous other articles of minor value. Next I went to his writing-desk. Finding that it was locked, I took a bundle of small keys from my pocket; but, after having tried them all, I found, to my regret, that none of them would fit. Not wishing to force the lock open, I was just thinking what was best to do, when I stepped on something solid on the floor; and, looking down, I saw it was a small key. Trying it in the lock of the desk, I was happy to find that it was the very key I wanted. The desk contained books, papers, letters, some valuables, a small sum of money, writing and

artist's materials, crayon drawings, a few water-color sketches, and other things too numerous to mention.

Among the papers I found a package of letters, written on drab-tinted paper, arranged in rotation, according to their respective dates, which were indorsed in red ink on each of them. They proved to be love-epistles, written by Lasalle's wife, at her parents' house in West Philadelphia. From them it appeared that her maiden name was Grace Frazer. In one of these letters she says, that, if she ever had the happiness of becoming his wife, she would never leave him, but cling to him through life,—in weal and woe, in gladness and in sorrow, until grim death should separate them; and that her last words should be a blessing for her darling Robert. Being a plain, matter-of-fact man, and a police-officer at that, I wondered whether, after learning that he was a common thief, she would feel inclined to follow him to Sing-Sing. I must confess that I had my doubts about it. I only read a few of the love-letters; for, to tell you the truth, they were a little too sweet for me. I knew that such talk was all blarney, and would not hold good when it came to the pinch. I now went to his trunk, which was wide open. It contained old clothing, linen, books, pictures, &c. I examined every article very carefully, and was greatly disappointed by not finding any thing whatever to arouse my suspicions. I assure you it was not an easy task to return the manifold articles to their proper places; but, being used to that kind of work, I accomplished it, as I thought admirably. I had just put the last article into the trunk, when I accidentally, and to

my great regret, discovered that I had forgotten to put back a cigar-box, half-filled with cigars, which was one of the last things I had taken from the trunk. While looking at the article with displeasure, a thought suddenly struck me, that a cigar-box, half empty, really had no business among all the rubbish in the trunk; and, while it would be quite natural to put a full box in a trunk, no sensible man, especially a smoker, would think of thus exposing the cigars to the danger of being broken; but that it would be more natural for him to put such a box on a shelf in the closet, on the mantel-piece, or on a table. Thus reasoning to myself, I resolved to empty the box of its contents, expecting to find at least fifty cigars. Unpacking them, I was greatly surprised to find only about half that number, while I had already reached the bottom; and I was still more astonished when I found that the box had a false bottom. Murder will out, said I to myself. Had I not accidentally forgotten to return the box to the trunk, I would never have thought of examining its contents so closely; but now my suspicions were aroused instantly. Taking a penknife from my pocket, I lifted the false bottom, and, to my still greater surprise, I found a white paper box, which fitted exactly in the space it occupied. You may easily imagine how eager I was to examine its contents; and although detectives, as a general rule, are not of a nervous temperament, I am in truthfulness forced to admit, that my hands trembled so much that I dropped the box; and you may picture my delight when I saw a large number of pawn-

tickets fall out of it upon the floor. I picked them up, counted them, and found that there were thirty-five in all, issued by various pawnbrokers in New York, Brooklyn, Jersey City, Hoboken, Newark, Philadelphia, Providence, and Boston; some for a single gold watch, and some for two or three. Gathering them up again, I put them into my wallet; and, consulting my watch, I found that it was already half-past eleven o'clock, and that in half an hour more Lasalle and his wife would probably return from church. I therefore concluded to discontinue my search. Placing the paper box in the cigar-box, and putting the cigars again on the false bottom, I wrapped the whole concern in an old newspaper; and, taking it with me, I was just about to unlock the door, in order to leave the room, when I heard the voice of the colored boy, who was talking to one of the servants. Thinking it would be best not to let them see me come out of Lasalle's room, I went back. Noticing a large photographic album on the table, it suddenly occurred to me that it might be wise, and perhaps save a great deal of unpleasantness, to procure his likeness now, for the Rogue's Gallery. Finding four different pictures of him in the album, I selected the one which in my estimation resembled him the most. Putting this also into my wallet, I made sure, by listening, that there was nobody in the entry; and then, carefully and noiselessly unbolting the door, I left the room, and walked quietly up stairs into my own.

Half an hour later the inmates of the house returned from church. That day all were punctual at

lunch. Lasalle was gayer and more talkative than on Saturday. His tongue went like a water-wheel, and again he had something to say to every one at the table. Not even me did he spare. "Mr. Henderson," said he, "have you been to church, my dear sir, or have you worshiped God in your own room? — which, in my opinion, is just as good, as long as people have the true religion in their hearts, and do what is right."

"I agree with you in that respect," said I; and then thought, what a hypocrite that brazen Frenchman is! The idea of talking of religion in such a manner, when he knows, in his own heart, that he is a wicked sinner. After lunch I went to Mr. Chapelleaux' residence in West Fourteenth Street. I showed him the pawn-tickets, and requested him to go with me to one or two of the pawnbrokers, to identify the property. He went with me first to a place in the Bowery, and then to another one in Chatham Street. As both pawnbrokers lived over their stores, we had no trouble in finding them at home. I showed them the pawn-tickets issued by them respectively, and demanded to see the watches. They produced them; and Mr. Chapelleaux was satisfied that they belonged to the missing property, and showed me his private mark on each of them, which was a small C in a circle. We then went to police headquarters. Not finding the chief there, I went to his private residence, while Mr. Chapelleaux returned to his own home. I saw the boss, and told him of my success. He expressed himself greatly satisfied with my doings, especially when I

showed him the cigar-box and the pawn-tickets. He said he considered it sufficient proof of Lasalle's guilt, and would go with me to his office to make out the necessary papers for the Frenchman's arrest. Arriving there, I handed him the confiscated property, and he soon handed me the warrant. After leaving him, I went to my home, to see if any thing had happened there.

"Well, Jim," said my wife, after we had exchanged salutations, "any prospects for a new dress?"

"Oh, yes!" replied I, "perhaps for a silk one."

I played with the children for an hour, and then left again. Wending my way to Waverley Place, I weighed in my mind the question, whether to arrest Lasalle before or after dinner. Perhaps you think that detectives have no regard for other people's feelings? But you are mistaken, my dear sir. Out of regard to Mrs. Moller and her other boarders, I resolved to put off the performance of the tragedy until half an hour after dinner, which on the sabbath was served as early as five o'clock. I arrived at my room at half past four. The short space of time seemed very long to me that afternoon, but at last the sound of the dinner-bell ended my suspense. As was probably always the case on Sundays, the guests were all very punctual at the table, with the exception of the Frenchman and his wife. Poor woman! her doom was sealed for ever.

"Lasalle is bound always to be the last at the table. I sometimes think he does it for effect," said Mrs. Moller smilingly. To me, however, matters soon became serious; for the third course had already been

served and the Lasalles had not made their appearance yet. The dessert was now placed on the table, and still they remained absent. I did not know what to make of it, and was just thinking whether I had not better find out where Lasalle was, when I heard a ring at the door-bell. About ten minutes afterwards, Lisette Bremer excitedly entered the room, and quickly walking to Mrs. Moller's seat, she whispered a few words into that lady's ear, who suddenly turned pale, hastily arose from her seat, and, begging the company to excuse her for a few moments, hurriedly left the room. I instantly felt that something was wrong; and, thinking that perhaps my time to act had already arrived, I followed Mrs. Moller's example by leaving the room. In the hall I met Lisette, with a glass of water in her hand, hastening up-stairs to Lasalle's room. I asked her if anybody was sick, and she said that Mrs. Lasalle had fainted. Under the pretense of offering my services to procure a physician, I followed her to Lasalle's room. On entering, I saw Mrs. Moller kneeling on the floor, and bending over the apparently lifeless body of Mrs. Lasalle. Approaching her, Mrs. Moller looked up at me with an expression of intense grief, and said, "Mr. Henderson, a great calamity has befallen our house. Look at this letter, which was delivered by a strange messenger just now."

Thus saying, she handed me a note, written in lead-pencil, and addressed to Mrs. Lasalle. I grasped the paper eagerly, and read the following words, which were hastily written by a trembling hand:—

"MY PRECIOUS DARLING,—A merciless fate has separated us for ever ! We can never meet again in life, and I fear not even in heaven. Pray for me ! Your unfortunate

"ROBERT."

I comprehended every thing in a moment. Lasalle, or his wife, had probably missed the photograph in the album, which aroused Lasalle's suspicions, and led him to believe that somebody had a motive in taking it. Then he had probably examined his trunk; and, missing the ill-fated cigar-box, he at once knew that his game was at an end, and that instant flight was advisable. Mrs. Moller had been in Lasalle's room at a quarter to four; and from her I learned that he had left as early as half past three, telling his wife that he was just going around the corner to get a newspaper, but did not return, leaving the poor woman in a dreadful state of suspense, fancying all sorts of terrible things, until at last the fatal letter verified her fears, that something dreadful had happened to her husband. I clearly saw that I had waited too long with Lasalle's arrest.

"James Donahoe," said I to myself, "you have made a great blunder; but, if Lasalle still lives on earth, he shall be found by you."

Mrs. Lasalle having revived from her fainting spell, no medical aid was needed; and, as my business at Waverley Place was now at an end, I went up-stairs to my room, packed my valise, and, after addressing a few lines to Mrs. Moller, I left the house, feeling greatly dissatisfied with myself. Not getting a chance to speak to Lisette before leaving, I left her to await further orders. Instead of proceeding to headquar-

ters, I telegraphed to John Rogers to meet me at my house instantly; and then, hiring a cab to drive me up there, I reached the house a few moments after he had arrived. Our consultation was brief; and, after ten minutes, he left me again. I then packed my trunk, providing myself with several disguise suits, three different wigs, some false beards, green eyeglasses, a pair of handcuffs, and various other articles of that nature. After this I wrote a letter to the chief, informing him what had happened, and requesting him to have one hundred card-pictures made from Lasalle's photograph, and send one to the police headquarters of every large city in the United States and in Canada. I also advised him to issue a search-warrant, and immediately institute a very careful search on Lasalle's premises. On the same evening Rogers went by the nine o'clock train to Philadelphia; while I took the eight o'clock train to Boston, intending to go from there to Canada. Before leaving New York, I engaged two experienced men to search for Lasalle in the city.

On Monday, before commencing my search, I hired a shrewd and trustworthy assistant, a man by the name of Strong, to go ahead of me to Portland, Quebec, and Montreal. After two days' labor in Boston, I felt satisfied that Lasalle was not there. I wrote from Boston to Lisette Bremer, requesting her to stay another week with Mrs. Moller, and watch what was going on there. On Tuesday evening I left by the six-o'clock train for Portland, arriving there at a quarter past ten. On Wednesday I worked very hard in Portland, but met with no success. On

Thursday night I reached Quebec. On my arrival there, I was rejoiced to find for me, at the St. Louis Hotel, a dozen card-pictures of Lasalle, which were mailed to me from New York on Monday night. I also found a telegram from my man Strong, requesting me to join him in Montreal without delay. There being no train to that city before the next morning, I stopped at the hotel overnight. Late on Friday evening I arrived at Montreal; and no sooner had I registered my name at the Ottawa Hotel, than Strong tapped me on the shoulder, expressing great anxiety to speak to me.

"What is up, Strong?" asked I, leading him aside.

"A man, answering your description of Lasalle, arrived here from Toronto yesterday, and I know where to lay my hands on him. He took lodgings at a small French hotel in St. Joseph Street," said Strong.

"Does he look like this?" asked I, showing him one of the card-pictures.

"That is the man! I could almost swear to it!" exclaimed my assistant.

"All right," said I: "come up stairs for a few moments, and I will go with you."

After ordering my trunk to be taken up stairs, and whispering a few words into the night clerk's ear, I took Strong up to my room. While he was examining the photograph more closely, I dressed up in my old man's disguise, put on a pair of spectacles, and then, addressing him in the voice of a feeble and toothless old man, I nearly frightened him out of his wits. You ought have seen how the fellow

laughed when he discovered that it was I. Twenty minutes later we arrived at the French hotel in St. Joseph Street. It was then nearly midnight, but the people had not gone to bed yet. I told Strong to lead me into the house, as if I needed his support, and then engage a room for me.

Detectives are generally good actors, and I could play my part pretty well.

I entered an assumed name, with an apparently trembling hand, in such a manner that the Devil himself could not have read it. The old gray-headed Frenchman who kept the house stood behind the counter. He looked at my signature through his eye-glasses, and then asked me in broken English, —

“Vat you call zat name, Monsieur?”

“John Carringtondale” I replied.

“Ah, yes! I comprehend,” said he. “Your name be Jean Herringtail, I see. Mr. Herringtail, will you drink some zing before you put yourself to bed? I will sell you one bottle of claret, zat will make your old blood run warm, and only charge you fifty cents.”

“Well,” said I, pretending to cough like an old man, “you may send a bottle of it, and two glasses, to my room. He fetched the wine from the cellar, then took two glasses from the shelf, and, while Strong was leading me up the narrow stairway, he followed us with an oil-lamp and the wine. Before leaving the room, he asked me if I would like roast pigeons for breakfast, and I told him yes. He then said, “Perhaps you would like to pay me for lodging, wine, and breakfast, because you not have any

baggage; and you be so old, zat you may die before morning, and zen I lose my money."

I thought that Frenchman had a hard cheek, but I could not keep from laughing at his strange request. Judging from his impudence, I expected that he would make an exorbitant charge, but I was mistaken; for, when I asked him how much he wanted, he said, —

"I will take, for lodging, wine, and breakfast, one dollar and a half."

Probably he thought that I had no money; for when I took from my pocket a roll of Canada bank-bills, and a lot of gold and silver, he seemed greatly surprised, and said, "O, Monsieur! zat is all right: I do not want ze money now; any time to-morrow will do. I never am in a hurry about ze pay when I meet one nice old gentleman like you. Good-night, Monsieur."

After he had left the room, I offered Strong a glass of wine.

"Thank you," said he, "I have been there: no more vinegar and logwood for me."

Laughing at his sarcastic remark, I tasted the wine, and found that he was correct. A few drops of it were quite enough for me.

"Now, Strong," said I, "go down stairs and find out by the register how the man, whom you suspect, entered his name."

"Oh! I know that already," replied he: "the name he gave was R. Fraser, from Paris."

"You don't say so?" exclaimed I.

"Why, what is the matter?" asked Strong, with surprise.

"A good deal is the matter," said I: "as you know, Lasalle came from Paris. His Christian name is Robert, and his wife's maiden name was Frazer. Murder will out, you see. No matter how smart a thief may be, he will always do something to commit himself. I bet we have found Lasalle."

I then dismissed Strong for the night, telling him to meet me at the Ottawa Hotel at nine o'clock the next morning. I now retired; but, although I was very fatigued from traveling, I did not sleep much that night. When the breakfast-bell rang, at seven o'clock the next morning, I was already up and dressed, and ready to go down-stairs. Looking at the register before going to breakfast, I found that the name entered was not R. Frazer, but B. Frazier, spelled F-r-a-z-i-e-r. Entering the dining-room, I saw the man himself, who resembled Lasalle very much, and might have passed for his brother; but it did not take me long to satisfy myself that it was not Lasalle, after all, although it was very natural that Strong should have made the mistake. When he met me afterwards, at the Ottawa Hotel, he felt, of course, greatly disappointed when I told him that he had been on the wrong track.

"Never mind," said I encouragingly: "no harm done. You may go to Toronto, and I will go to Ottawa; for I still believe that Lasalle is in Canada."

We both took the same train as far as Prescott Junction, where we separated; he going one way, and I the other. At Ottawa I stopped at the Russell House. This was on Sunday. The weather was clear and cold, and the sleighing lively. Not a single

carriage or wagon was visible. In the afternoon I took a walk around the city. On my way back I was just crossing the bridge on Sparks Street, when I saw a handsome sleigh, drawn by a pair of spirited black horses, coming up the street. The sleigh was driven by a fine-looking gentleman, with blonde hair and blonde moustache, which strangely contrasted with his sparkling black eyes. At his side sat a handsome, healthy-looking young lady, also a blonde, resembling the gentleman in color of hair and eyes, and in vivacity of gestures while speaking to each other. The sleigh was now passing me; and I was just thinking what a handsome couple they were, when my trained ears suddenly caught the merry laugh of the gentleman in the sleigh, which resembled Lasalle's merry laugh so much, that, had I not seen the stranger's face and only heard his voice, I could have sworn that it was Lasalle himself. Inquiring of a passing police-officer if he knew whose sleigh that was, he said, "Yes, sir: the sleigh belongs to Thomas McAuley, a wealthy merchant of Ottawa. The young lady is his daughter; and the gentleman is Eugene Delatour from Paris, who is visiting at McAuley's house." Thanking the officer for his information, I went to the hotel; and, looking in the Directory for the address of McAuley, I found that he lived in the most fashionable part of the city. You may be surprised to hear, that, in spite of having seen with my own eyes that the gentleman in the sleigh was not Lasalle, I stationed myself in disguise a little before seven o'clock that evening near the residence of McAuley. But such was the fact. We

detectives see and hear such strange things, that we are forced to think that every thing is possible, and therefore are surprised at nothing. I had waited about ten minutes, when a sleigh, much larger than the one I had seen in the afternoon, was driven up to the door by a coachman in livery. A few minutes afterwards the same young couple, and two elderly persons whom I supposed to be Mr. and Mrs. McAuley, came from the house, and entered the sleigh; and again I heard the never-to-be-forgotten merry laugh of Lasalle, and his melodious voice. Had not the severe cold pinched my nose and ears that evening, I might have imagined that I was only dreaming. The sleigh left; and I was undecided what to do, when I saw a young man, with a hymn-book under his arm, leaving the house. Taking it for granted that the family had gone to church, and that the young man would go to the same house of worship, I resolved to follow him. Keeping behind him at a proper distance, I found that I was not mistaken; and, by walking a little faster when approaching the church, we entered the edifice almost at the same time. The service had already commenced, and they were singing the last verse of a hymn when we got inside. To my delight, the young man went to the place where the McAuley family were sitting. I took a seat right over them in the gallery, from which, unnoticed, I could watch the party. Being in disguise, I could boldly look at them without arousing suspicion. I always carried in my pocket a pair of magnifying spectacles. Looking down at the young lady's escort, I noticed, by chance, that the

color of his hair greatly varied from that of all other blonde gentlemen in the congregation; his being much lighter and almost of a flaxen hue. No sooner had I made this discovery, than it suddenly occurred to me that I once heard a physician speak of a French invention,—a process by which the darkest hair could be bleached into a blonde. Could it be possible that this was Lasalle, after all? I now closely examined the stranger's features; and, before I left the church that evening, I was fully convinced that I had found the escaped criminal. The same evening I telegraphed to Strong to join me in Ottawa immediately. Another telegram I sent to John Rogers, who at that time was in Washington, D.C., requesting him to return to New York instantly, and await my further orders there. A third telegram I sent to the chief of police, informing him that I had got on Lasalle's track. In a fourth telegram I requested Mrs. Moller to write to me by return of mail, care of Post-Office, Suspension Bridge, if she had heard any thing from Lasalle. In self-praise I must say, that, after I had returned to my room at the hotel, it took me only ten minutes to lay out my whole plan of operation; which proved a success, as you will hereafter see. On Monday afternoon Strong arrived at Ottawa. I pointed out to him McAuley's residence, described Lasalle's present appearance, and directed him to stay in Ottawa, and shadow the Frenchman, and follow him wherever he might go, reporting to me at Suspension Bridge, care of Western Hotel, punctually, every day. Leaving Ottawa the same afternoon, I went by the way of

Toronto and Hamilton to the Suspension Bridge. Arriving there on Wednesday noon, I took lodgings at the Western Hotel. I found a letter from Mrs. Moller at the post-office, stating that she had heard nothing of Lasalle, and that his wife had returned to her parents' house in Philadelphia, somewhat deranged in mind. I now procured an intelligent lady to imitate Mrs. Moller's hand-writing and signature; and, after I was fully satisfied that she could do it to perfection, I dictated to her the following letter:—

“EUGENE DELATOUR, Esq.—

“*Care Post-Office, Ottawa, Ontario.*

“A clairvoyant has told your wife that you are in Ottawa, under the above-assumed name. She knows all about your unfortunate matter, and forgives you, saying that you did the wrong only for her sake. She insists on seeing you once more, before parting with you for ever, and wants you to meet her in disguise, in the ladies' room at the Suspension Bridge, next Monday night, at seven o'clock. Now, if you do not want to drive your poor wife mad, be sure to be there; that is, if the clairvoyant has told her correctly, and this letter reaches you.

“Your true friend,

“HENRIETTE MOLLER.”

My calculation was, that, by not mentioning on which side of the bridge she wanted to meet him, he naturally would first look for her on the Canadian side, and, not finding her there, he would undoubtedly venture over to the American side. You never saw a better counterfeit than that letter. I was so pleased with it, that I paid the lady ten dollars for her work, which gladdened her poor heart, I can tell you. If any thing would fetch Lasalle,

that letter surely would; for, from a remark I read in one of Mrs. Lasalle's love-letters, I knew that both strongly believed in clairvoyants, and even in fortune-tellers. In the evening I mailed the letter to Rogers to New York, to be remailed by him from there to Ottawa. I also requested him to join me at the Western Hotel on Monday morning. The next day I received his answer by telegraph, saying that he had remailed my letter, and that he would be on hand in due time.

On Thursday and Friday Strong reported that there was no change in Lasalle's movements. On Saturday Strong telegraphed that he saw Lasalle receive my letter at the Ottawa post-office. The same day another telegram was received from Strong, stating that Lasalle had bought a ticket for the evening train to Toronto. On Sunday Strong reported his and Lasalle's arrival at Toronto, stating that they were both stopping at the "Rossin House," and that Lasalle had entered his name on the register as Eugene Delatour, from Paris. On Monday morning Strong sent another telegram, informing me that Lasalle had bought a ticket for the one-o'clock train to the bridge, which was due there at six o'clock in the evening. In the mean time Rogers had arrived from New York. When I informed him what had been done by me, he expressed himself greatly satisfied, and said the whole affair was managed in a masterly manner, which flattering remark, made by an old experienced hand like him, somewhat consoled me for the great blunder I had made at the beginning of the affair. In the afternoon, while Rogers

was in my room, he suddenly said, "Show me your handcuffs, Jim! I want to see which are the prettiest, and would be the most becoming to your handsome Frenchman with the golden hair." I showed him my handcuffs. "I like yours the best," said he. "How would it be, to have his initials engraved on them? R. L. would make a handsome monogram." I saw that Rogers was full of the devil; but I did not mind it, and let him have his own way. We had known each other eleven years. I knew him to be true as steel, and greatly attached to me. Besides, he was calm, quick-witted, and courageous, and a better detective could be found nowhere. The afternoon was pleasantly spent in talking and joking. At five o'clock I ordered supper for two, because Rogers suggested that it was not healthy to work on an empty stomach. At a quarter before six o'clock we had finished our meal, and were leisurely walking towards the depot. The train was behind time, as is often the case in winter; but at last it came. When I heard the sound of the steam-whistle, I consulted my watch, and found that it was twenty minutes to seven. There were a great many passengers on the train that night. Quite a number got out to have their baggage inspected by the custom-house officers, yet a great many remained in the cars. It was a dark night, but the depot was lighted up sufficiently to see every thing that was going on. I can not deny that I was a little excited. I stood near the ladies' room, in the disguise of a hackman; while Rogers was stationed at a little distance from me, with orders to watch my movements, and to join me as soon

as he saw me remove my fur cap, but not before. Strong had been among the first passengers that left the cars. He had already joined me, and had informed me that Lasalle was in the last passenger-car, dressed as an old Quaker, with long, gray hair, wearing green spectacles. He had also stated that Lasalle had got out on the Canadian side, at Clifton, and searched the ladies' waiting-room, acting very nervously; that he had seemed undecided whether to cross the bridge by that train or not, but finally had jumped on while the train was in motion. For a while we were doomed to a feeling of dreadful suspense. The train had already stopped fifteen minutes, and would shortly leave again, and yet Lasalle was not visible any where. I did not know what to think of it, and wondered whether Lasalle had concluded to go by the train to the next station, and then return. I was just saying to Strong, "I fear you will have to shadow the Frenchman a little longer," when I heard the conductor cry out, "All aboard for the East!" A few moments afterwards the train was set in motion; and I was just about to tell Strong to jump on quickly, when I saw an old Quaker, wearing green spectacles, appear on the rear platform of the last passenger-car, who, though the train was increasing in speed, hastily jumped from the steps; but, being encumbered by a valise and an umbrella, he lost his foothold, slipped off, and fell to the ground, with his back on the sleepers of the track. Holding Strong's arm, I had almost breathlessly watched the occurrence, taking it of course for granted that this was Lasalle. Prompted by a feeling of humanity, I

now hastened to his assistance. Approaching the spot, I noticed that by the force of the fall his eyeglasses had been knocked off, and a moment later I saw the wicked black eyes of Robert Lasalle staring at me with an expression of great mental and physical suffering. I comprehended it all in a single moment, and could not help recognizing the hand of Providence in the matter. The Frenchman undoubtedly trying to evade notice, on the arrival of the train had lingered about one minute too long before getting off, and thus, by the almighty will of God, was to meet his well-deserved fate. He had sprained his ankle, and was unable to walk without aid. I turned around, and, by taking off my fur cap for a moment, gave the signal to Rogers and Strong, who promptly joined me. I proposed to Lasalle to go with us to the hotel, but he insisted on being taken to the ladies' waiting-room. I could not restrain my feelings any longer. We had assisted him in rising; and Rogers and I were leading him, while Strong walked behind us with Lasalle's satchel and umbrella, when I suddenly turned around to our prisoner. Removing my wig and false beard, I looked him full in the face, and then sternly said, —

“Robert Lasalle, it is no use to look for your wife: you will never behold her again, and your fine game is at an end.” No sooner had I spoken those fatal words than his knees began to totter, and muttering a few words in French, which sounded like, “*Mon Dieu ! mon Dieu ! je suis perdu !*” the powerful man fainted in our arms; and while still unconscious we carried him to my room at the hotel, put him on the bed, and handcuffed him.

Neither of my assistants had spoken a single word during the whole proceedings; but now, when we were all seated near the bedside of the criminal, Rogers said to me, "Jim, that job was put up well, and it will tickle the boss when he hears of it."

Ten minutes afterwards Lasalle opened his eyes, Rogers having placed a bottle of hartshorn under his nose. He attempted to move his hands, but found that he was restrained by the handcuffs. He first looked at me with an expression of awe, and then said, in a pitiful tone, "Mr. Henderson, was my unfortunate wife at the bridge?"

"She was not," replied I.

"Are you sure of it?" he asked again.

"I am," said I, "for she knows nothing of the letter that brought you here."

"Oh, I see it all!" he exclaimed, closing his eyes, as if to meditate. When he opened them again, I asked him if he wanted any food; and he replied, —

"I am not hungry, only weak. Can you get me some wine?"

"Certainly," said I, "any thing you wish to drink."

"I would like a bottle of St. Julien," said he: "you will find a wallet with Canadian bank-bills in my vest pocket. Please take from it as much as you require."

"Never mind," said I: "we will settle that some other time."

Strong went for the wine, and soon returned with a bottle of the best claret. Lasalle drank three glasses of it, and then fell asleep. I left him in charge of my assistants, and went to the telegraph

office. From there I dispatched a message to the chief, saying, —

“Have captured Lasalle. Will start for New York to-morrow.”

Another telegram, to the same effect, I sent to my wife. The next morning we started for home. Lasalle spoke very little during our journey, merely asking a few questions regarding his wife and Mrs. Moller. Among other things, he wanted to know if Mrs. Moller had been bribed to write that letter; and when I told him that the document was forged, he would not believe it, and said that he knew her handwriting and peculiar signature too well, and that he would be willing to swear that she had written it. On Wednesday morning we reached New York. Arriving at the depot, I hired a carriage, which conveyed us to police headquarters, from whence Lasalle was taken to the jail. A few weeks afterwards he was tried; and as, during the second search, a box containing more than forty fine gold watches had been found concealed in a hole under the floor of Lasalle's sleeping-room, he was convicted of grand larceny. The firm of Chapelleaux Frères & Co. recovered a large portion of their property. I got the reward, my wife got a silk dress, and Lasalle got ten years in Sing Sing at hard labor.

Thus ended the strange affair, and thus ends this long story.

TWENTY MINUTES BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH.

SINCE I commenced writing this book, I have frequently asked friends and acquaintances if any thing strange had ever happened to them, or if they knew of any thing wonderful that had happened to others.

On making inquiry to that effect a few days ago, I was pleased to learn from a dear friend, a commercial traveler from Boston, that he had met with an adventure worth relating, which, being truly a strange occurrence, would be very acceptable to me in the completion of my book.

"I only fear my story will be too short for you," said my friend; "for it is founded on a very simple fact, an every-day occurrence, in the shape of a railroad accident, only varying a little from those which we generally read of in newspapers."

"A short story is just the thing I want this moment," replied I; "for my last one, 'The Detective's Story,' turned out to be much longer than I intended; and, as I have limited myself to a certain number of pages, a brief sketch will answer my purpose admirably."

"All right," said my friend: "you are welcome to it; when will you have it?"

"Now, if you please," exclaimed I.

"Very well," said he. "Sit down: I am ready to give it to you."

And here is his story:—

"As you know," he commenced, "my business calls me twice a year to the West. Sometimes I go as far as Salt Lake City, and occasionally as far as San Francisco. Last winter I had a pretty hard time of it, as heavy snow-storms and drift-winds made the roads rather unsafe, and traveling slow and tedious; and you may imagine that we poor devils are glad enough, when, after a four months' trip, we once more reach home with straight limbs. On the trip I am speaking of, I came very near being killed or crippled for life; and even when I think of it now, my blood runs cold. I was on my way to Omaha, in the latter part of February, when within two miles of a small station, the train suddenly stopped. On inquiry, I learned from the conductor that a wheel on one of the passenger-cars had cracked, and that the train could be run only very slowly to the next depot. Tired of riding in the cars, some of the gentlemen got out to breathe the fresh air; while three of us, being provided with waterproof boots, resolved to walk to the station. To accomplish this was not a very easy task: but, as we all happened to be good-natured and of cheerful dispositions, the many obstacles with which we had to contend on our way were readily turned by us into sources of merriment; and, briskly wading through the deep snow, we at last reached our destination. After having partaken of some refreshments, we concluded to walk back a

short distance to meet the train, which, as we supposed, had started again by this time. Passing through a tunnel, I remarked that I would not like to meet with an accident in that dark passage. Little did I think then, that soon afterwards I should come near losing my life on that very spot. Emerging from the damp and gloomy thoroughfare, we proceeded on our way for a while, when at last we saw the train at a great distance, slowly approaching us.

"Ten minutes later we had reached it; and, thinking it an easy matter to jump aboard, we attempted to do so. The other two gentlemen had already safely landed on the platform, and had passed into a car; but, while I was endeavoring to jump on, the train, unnoticed by me, was increasing a little in speed, and, failing in my close calculation to land on the icy steps, I lost my foothold, slipped off, and fell under the car, with my back to the ground and my face upwards. Instantly comprehending my critical position, I frantically grasped, with both hands, an iron bar under the car, and held on with a firm grasp. I was now dragged along by the train, while shouting at the top of my voice: 'Help! Help! Save me! Save me!' Owing to the rattling noise of the cars, my cries were not heard by any one; and, as I afterwards learned, the other two gentlemen having gone into the smoking-car, my absence was not noticed by any one on the train. Fortunately the track was covered with snow, and therefore my back was not broken on the sleepers as otherwise it soon would have been. Again I screamed for help, but in vain. The jarring of the car and the strain on the

muscles of my arms now caused me a dreadful pain; and, being only lightly built, my strength soon began to fail me. Another terror seized my heart; for, once more attempting to cry for help, I found that my voice had left me, and that I was unable to utter an articulate sound. I knew that we would soon approach the tunnel, where the sleepers not being covered with snow, a sad fate awaited me. Oh, what terrible thoughts flashed through my whirling brain at that moment! I was not married. No wife nor children would be left to mourn for me; but other ties nearly as strong were holding me, endearing life and causing fear of death. Strange as it may appear, my whole life, almost from the days of my infancy, now passed like a swiftly moving panorama before my mind's eye. Again I tried to call for help, but found that I was powerless in the attempt. Owing to the severe cold, my limbs were now growing numb; and as we were nearing the tunnel, I felt that my senses were rapidly leaving me, and that my moments were numbered. A sudden dizziness, the loss of my sight, and the seemingly stiffening of my whole body, now strengthened me in the belief that death was creeping over me; and, inwardly muttering a few words of prayer, imploring God to have mercy on my soul, I closed my eyes, as I then thought for ever, in expectation of a horrible death.

"This was the last thought I had on that fatal day, for my senses then left me.

"When, after eight hours of unconsciousness I finally awoke, it was night; and I found myself in bed, in a strange house, surrounded by strangers,

who seemed rejoiced at seeing me come to life again.

"A kind-looking old lady approached me, and asked how I felt. I tried to answer; but my lips were parched, and I was unable to speak. She then asked me if I wanted a cup of tea, and I shook my head. Every bone in my body seemed to ache; and I felt so exhausted and drowsy, that I soon fell asleep again. A few hours later I awoke once more, and found an elderly gentleman at my bedside, in whom I recognized the physician, as he was just feeling my pulse when I awoke. He induced me to take a spoonful of medicine, which seemed to loosen my tongue, for soon afterwards I was able to converse freely.

"My first request was for a drink of water; and my second, for a message to be sent to my firm in Boston, which I dictated as follows: 'Met with an accident and laid up; send somebody here.'

"The next morning I learned from the landlord of the hotel, for such was the place to which I had been taken, that the car to which I had clung was just about entering the tunnel, when the brakeman, who had come out on the platform, accidentally noticed me; and stopping the train instantly, just at the entrance of the tunnel, he, with the assistance of others, had dragged my apparently lifeless body from under the car, and that they had experienced great difficulty in doing so, as my hands, which were then still holding on to the iron bar, had so firmly tightened in the death-grip, that, on loosening my hold, those who rescued me were actually afraid of breaking my fingers. My host also told me, that, after

having been taken to his house, they had put me to bed, and sent for a doctor, who, on first seeing me, had expressed his doubts as to my recovery, but had done all in his power to relieve me, and soon I was slowly gaining strength. Seven days later my heart was gladdened by the arrival of a dear friend from Boston; and three weeks afterwards, owing to the good care I received, I was able to proceed on my onward journey almost entirely recovered.

“God in his great kindness had seen fit to save me from a terrible fate, as it can not be denied, that for twenty long minutes I was hanging between life and death.”

A BAD OMEN.

THERE are thousands of people who so strongly believe in omens, that the howling of a dog, or the breaking of a looking-glass, being followed by a death in the family, is looked upon by them as a matter of course. These people are frequently censured, and even ridiculed, by those pretending to be entirely free from superstition; and yet we must admit that we often hear of strange occurrences, calculated to create in us a belief that forebodings of coming events, either good or evil, are sent to us from another world. Although I myself have never had cause to believe in omens, I can not deny that I have often listened with the greatest interest to the narratives of persons who have had experiences in that direction, and whom I knew to be truthful and sincere. One of these communications, still fresh in my memory, is worth relating; and it being a matter of fact, and not of fiction, I thought you, dear reader, might feel interested in listening to the singular story. So I will acquaint you with the circumstances connected therewith.

One pleasant afternoon last winter, while leisurely walking up the Eighth Avenue, in New York, I chanced to notice, in the show window of a small

variety store, a pretty little ornament, in the shape of a miniature bird-cage, apparently a production of Chinese or Japanese skill. Thinking that I would like to procure the tasty little article for my collection of curiosities, I went into the store, with the intention of purchasing it. On entering the establishment I noticed a light-haired, blue-eyed little boy, about six years old, engaged in playing marbles on the floor. Judging from his looks and dress that he was of German parentage, I inquired of him, in German, who attended the store; to which he replied, that his mother was in the back-room, and would wait on me directly. Having almost instantly taken a liking to the open-faced little fellow, I kept up a conversation with him for a few minutes, when a young lady, dressed in black, silently and noiselessly descended the few steps, leading from the sitting-room to the store, and placed herself behind the counter. I instantly recognized in her the mother of the little boy, for they resembled each other very much. She was not particularly handsome; yet there was something in her mild and ladylike manner that commanded admiration and respect. Her eyes, apparently weak from loss of sleep or from weeping, rested earnestly on me when she asked, —

“What is it you wish, sir?”

I told her my errand by inquiring the price of the little ornament.

“It is marked two dollars, but you may have it for one,” said the lady; and then, without waiting my answer, continued, —

“I am heartily glad to dispose of it; for it has been

an eyesore to me for many months past, and I came several times very near destroying it. Sad recollections are connected with it; and, in fact, of late I can hardly look at a bird or a bird-cage without weeping."

The sad tone in which she made this remark having touched a sympathetic chord in my heart, I now begged of her to relate to me the circumstance which had caused the strange dislike mentioned by her. Having conversed with her in her native tongue, I had seemingly already gained her confidence; and, readily complying with my request, she commenced telling me her sad story, as follows:—

"You see, sir, that I am in mourning; and I can assure you, that, although I am still young in years, I have had grief and trouble enough to make me feel very old. For nearly six months I have been a widow. I had been happily married nearly eight years, when my good husband was taken away from me so suddenly and so unexpectedly, that I have never yet recovered from the shock; and I really feel that I never shall, for I think my health is failing. My husband was a merchant-tailor; and fully understanding his trade, and being enterprising and industrious, he prospered in business. Although we lived very plainly, we knew no care nor sorrow, for I loved and respected him; and he, in return, was very fond of me and of our only child, the poor little boy you see there. As we kept no help, our expenses were comparatively small; and while I assisted him in the store, my mother, who lived with us, attended to household matters. In this way you see, and by great economy, we saved during the first five years

enough to make a payment of a thousand dollars on this little house, which my husband bought on easy terms from a friend who emigrated to the Far West. While we generally closed our store at nine o'clock in the evening, it was customary with us on Saturdays to keep open until half-past ten or eleven o'clock at night. On these last-named evenings, being the end of the week, my husband was in the habit, after closing the store, of going for half an hour or so to the house of his brother, who kept a shoe-store not very far from us on the avenue.

One Saturday last June, being a very stormy night, we closed at ten o'clock, after which my husband started to visit his brother; and first kissing the child, and then me, he went out in the best humor, whistling an operatic tune as he left the house, while I and my boy went up stairs into the back parlor, where I found my mother engaged in sewing. After putting my child to bed, I joined the old lady in the parlor; and, taking a newspaper from the table, I commenced reading, with the intention of awaiting my husband's return. He rarely staid out after half past eleven, but on that night he was still absent from home at a quarter to twelve; but, knowing his temperate habits, I did not think strange of this little irregularity on his part.

"About a year ago I mentioned to my kind husband that I would like to get a canary-bird; and, as my birthday happened to be soon afterwards, he presented me on that occasion with a fine singer and a handsome cage. In warm weather we used to hang the cage out of the back window, and rarely

forgot to take it in at dark. On the evening aforesaid, however, the cage, by neglect, was not taken into the house, but, in spite of the inclemency of the weather, was still hanging outside at that late hour. The clock on the mantle-piece was just striking twelve, and I was getting a little worried about my husband's absence from home at that late hour of the night, when my mother and myself were suddenly startled by the sound of a crash on the pavement of the yard below; and both hastening down stairs, we found, to our great terror and regret, that the cage had fallen from the hook, and that the poor little bird had been killed. I cried like a child over the death of my little pet, and for a moment forgot all anxiety about my husband. Of course, I took it for granted that the hook on which the cage had been hanging had rusted and broken off, thus causing the sad accident. On returning to the back parlor, accompanied by my mother, I went to the window; and, looking at the spot from which the cage had fallen, I found, to my great surprise and amazement, that the hook was not broken off, but had remained sound and strong in its former position. On noticing this miraculous fact, a pang seized my heart, an unaccountable sadness spread over my soul. Horror-stricken, I turned around to my mother; and, ringing my hands in despair, I exclaimed, in a pitiful tone, '*Mother! mother! this is a bad omen!*' The old lady tried to quiet me, but I would listen to nothing. I felt too sure that something awful had happened to my poor dear husband. Frantically I ran to the bedside of my darling boy, as if to satisfy myself that he, at least, was still

alive; and, finding all right, I hastily kissed him on the cheek, then rushing to the closet, I took my hat and shawl, and saying a few words to my mother, I leaped down stairs, and was just unlocking the front door, when the cautious old lady called me back, advising me to take an umbrella. I was almost angry at her for the delay; and telling her not to mind it, I rushed into the street, and then ran as fast as I could to the house of my brother-in-law. He had not gone to bed yet; and, in answer to my inquiries, he told me that my husband had left him a little before eleven o'clock, saying it was getting late and he would go home. I told him what had happened at our house; and he seemed to get nervous and worried, which increased my own uneasiness and fear still more. I begged of him to assist me in my search for my husband, to which he readily consented; and five minutes later, in a drenching rain, we started out on our fruitless errand. We first visited six or seven of our acquaintances, at whose houses he might possibly have called, but none of them had seen him on that fatal evening. We then went to several station-houses, but could learn nothing about him. Frantic with despair, I proposed returning home to see if he had been there in the mean time, which my brother-in-law deemed probable. We were just about entering the house, when a carriage drove up to the door; and a moment afterwards we were confronted by a tall police-officer, who, after ascertaining my name, told me that an hour before the dead body of a man had been found in the North River, which, from documents found in

his breast-pocket, was supposed to be that of my unfortunate husband ; that the corpse had been taken to the morgue, and that I was wanted there to identify the body.

“ On hearing the horrible news, I grew deathly sick, and so weak that I had to be lifted into the carriage. Twenty minutes later, I had fainted at the morgue over the lifeless form of my best and truest friend, the father of my poor darling boy.

“ His death, up to this moment, remains a great mystery to us. My husband was never known to be deranged in mind, nor had I ever seen him absent-minded, melancholy, or despondent. We lived very happily together, and he had no financial troubles to annoy him. He had, to my knowledge, no enemies ; but on the contrary, owing to his affable manners, he was respected and beloved by all who knew him. He was of temperate habits, and, as he often assured me, had never been intoxicated in his life. The theory that he might have been robbed, and then pushed into the river, could not be adopted ; for, when found, he was in full possession of all his valuables. No one can tell what possessed him to stray to the water ; but one thing seems sure, and this is, that he met with his death at the same time that the cage fell from the hook : I knew then that it was a bad omen.”

With these words she finished her pitiful story ; and, after having found relief in a flood of tears, she asked me what I thought of it.

What could I think of it, and what could I say to her ? And what would you, dear reader, have said to her ?

Undoubtedly the wind had blown down the cage ; but, in connection with the circumstances that followed, was it not enough to make the poor woman superstitious for the rest of her life? What else could she call the strange death of her pet bird, but *a bad omen.*

A DREAM REALIZED.

WHILE stopping at the Parker House, Boston, during the early part of last winter, I received one morning the following note:—

“TAUNTON, MASS., Dec. 6, 1876.

“FRIEND D,—Yesterday I learned from our mutual friend, F. W., that you were in Boston, intending to stay there for a week. We expect a few friends at our house next Thursday evening, to participate in the celebration of the twelfth anniversary of our wedding-day. My wife, as well as myself, would be greatly pleased to see you on that occasion; and I am sure the children would be delighted, for, since your visit to Taunton last summer, they have never ceased speaking of you and of the fun you made for their especial benefit. If you have no previous engagement, do not fail to come. My wife wishes me to add, that she would feel greatly disappointed, should you decline our invitation.

Yours sincerely,

“H. B. L.

“P.S.—No white kids required.”

Having no previous engagement for the evening mentioned, I accepted my friend's cordial invitation; and, leaving Boston at half past five in the afternoon, I reached Taunton early enough to take my supper at the City Hotel, after which I engaged in a friendly conversation with Mr. Bliss, the gentlemanly proprietor. It was a little after eight o'clock when I reached the residence of my friend. On ringing the

bell, I heard some merry little voices in the hall. A moment afterwards the door was quickly opened; and I was joyfully greeted by my little favorites, the children of my friend, two pretty little girls, aged respectively seven and nine years, and a bright-looking boy of eleven.

"Mamma was afraid you would not come; but I knew you would, for you said so in your letter," said the youngest.

"Please walk into the parlor: papa is anxiously waiting for you," said the boy.

On entering the brilliantly illuminated room, I noticed an assemblage of about fifteen ladies, and perhaps ten or twelve gentlemen. After congratulating my friend and his wife on the happy occasion, the former introduced me to the company, at the same time assigning to me the honor of arranging the amusements of the evening. Complying with his request, I arose from my seat and said, —

"Ladies and gentlemen, — There can be no doubt that we have all come here to have a pleasant time; and for that purpose I would like to propose a plan, calculated to promote the enjoyments of the evening and to make our friendly meeting a success. Being fully aware of, and most favorably impressed with, the intelligence of the New England people, I am sure, that, even within this comparatively small circle, there are talents which only need to be brought to light to show off to good advantage. The plan I propose to adopt is simply this: I will take the liberty of calling upon each of you in succession to do something for the benefit of the rest. Those who are able

to sing or play the piano, will please to do so. Others, competent to recite poetry or relate stories, will kindly avail themselves of the opportunity offered to them hereby. In cases of emergency we would even accept an anecdote or a conundrum; but we will under no circumstances grant an excuse to any one, be it on the claim of inability, or for other reasons." My plan being cheerfully adopted, I proceeded to business at once.

The first party I called upon was a handsome brunette of about eighteen summers. When I politely asked her what she proposed to do, she modestly and unassumingly replied: "I play the piano. If you wish, I will play a piece."

"Thank you," said I, "that will do;" and having led her to the instrument, she treated us to some selections from the opera of "Martha;" which she played so well that I complimented her on her talent, and congratulated the company on our good beginning.

The second person called upon was a young gentleman, who kindly and gracefully volunteered to favor us with a song. He had a fine tenor voice, and sang the Prison Song from "Il Trovatore" charmingly. It is hardly necessary to mention that each performer was enthusiastically applauded. The third party invited to contribute to the amusements of the evening was the son of my friend. He recited a patriotic poem, which impressed me so favorably, that I afterwards requested him to give me a copy of it; and, as he granted my wish, I am enabled to give you, dear reader, the benefit of the fine composition. So here it is:—

GOD FOR OUR NATIVE LAND.

God's blessing be upon
Our own, our native land, —
The land our fathers won
By the strong heart and hand,
The keen ax and the brand,
When they fell'd the forest's pride,
And the tyrant foe defied, —
The free, the rich, the wide:
God for our native land !

Up with the starry sign, —
The red stripes and the white.
Where'er its glories shine,
In peace or in the fight,
We own its high command;
For the flag our fathers gave,
O'er our children's heads shall wave,
And their children's children's grave:
God for our native land !

Who doth that flag defy,
We challenge as our foe:
Who will not for it die
Out from us must go,
So let them understand!
Who that dear flag disclaim,
Which won our fathers' fame,
We brand with endless shame:
God for our native land !

Our native land, to thee,
In one united vow,
To keep thee strong and free
And glorious as now,
We pledge each heart and hand,
By the blood our fathers shed,
By the ashes of our dead,
By the sacred soil we tread:
God for our native land !

Next to my young friend sat an elderly, robust-looking gentleman, with gray hair. When I approached him, I felt a little afraid that he might disappoint us, but I was agreeably mistaken. When I called on him, he good-naturedly smiled, and then said, —

“From a remark you made this evening, I suppose I can not well be excused; but it may be a difficult task for me to amuse you as well as my young friends have done before me. However, I will try my best. I used to be a seafaring man; and, like most sailors, I can spin a yarn, as we call it. However, on one thing you can rely; and that is, that whatever I may tell you is the truth, and nothing but the truth, and I am able and willing to prove it to you if you wish.”

A hearty applause, and shouts of, “Good, Captain! go on! spin your yarn!” encouraged the pleasant old gentleman to commence; and here is his story, as near as I can remember it.

“Next to the Bible,” he said, “there perhaps never was a book as well written and as universally appreciated as the good old story of Robinson Crusoe. In the years of my boyhood, upwards from my ninth year, I read it at least every six months, and sometimes oftener; and the trouble was, that I read it too often for my own good, for it put all sorts of strange and romantic notions into my head, and nearly unfitted me for every thing else. My father often told me so; and, in order to make a practical man of me, he forced me, at the age of fifteen, to learn a trade, kindly leaving the choice to myself. I first learned the trade of ship-carpenter, but afterwards became a seafaring man.

"At that time gas was not so universally introduced, and coal-oil had not yet taken the place of sperm-oil; and for this reason whaling still proved to be a profitable enterprise. Having for some time past devoted most of my leisure hours to the study of navigation, and possessing a fair knowledge of things in general, I had been to sea but a few years, when I was promoted to the rank of an officer; and as such, at the age of twenty-one, I shipped in the service of a company, and started on a whaling expedition from New Bedford, Massachusetts, on the fifth day of April, eighteen hundred and forty-three.

"The name of our ship was 'The Orazimbo,' carrying four boats and a crew of about forty men. When we were getting ready to start from Taber's Wharf, it was nearly noon, and a pleasanter spring day could hardly be imagined. The sun shone brightly; and everybody seemed cheerful except my sister, who, in company with my aged parents and my younger brother, had come to the wharf to wish me good-by. When she put her arms around my neck, she burst into tears, and sobbed as if her heart would break. I can tell you, my friends, it was a hard task for me to part from her; and I had to cut the interview rather short, for even my strong nerves began to weaken under the great emotion of her loving heart. Twenty minutes later we were on our way to the sea. The good old town soon vanished out of sight, but my sister's nervousness was still spreading an unaccountable gloom over my soul. In fact, for many hours afterwards I remained in this mood; and not until the pilot had left us, near Pune Island, did I feel calm

and composed again. Then the regular routine of business, consisting of choosing the watches and selecting the boats' crews, as is customary on whaling ships, made me forget, for the time being, all thoughts of home; and the ensuing day found me all right in spirit, and as active a whaling-man as could be found in the State of Massachusetts, nor was there any one to surpass me in discipline, or in courage; for to tell you the truth, good folks, I was a regular dare-devil when at sea, and not much better when on land. It would not be interesting to you to hear me describe our monotonous life, spiced only occasionally by some dangerous adventure in pursuing and attacking the monsters of the ocean. Let me simply state to you, that we had been cruising nearly three months, when we reached the Western or Azore Islands. On the thirtieth day of June, being on what we on shipboard call 'the watch below,' I was allowed to sleep from four until eight o'clock in the morning. Being very fatigued, I had hardly turned in, when I fell asleep; and soon afterwards I had a frightful dream, of which I am now going to tell you. I dreamed that I had returned to my parents' house in County Street, New Bedford; and on entering the parlor, I perceived a crowd of people, while in the center of the room I beheld a mahogany coffin, all closed, and handsomely decorated with flowers. My parents and my brother were sitting near the coffin, bathed in tears. Our family physician, and the minister of our church, were standing near the window, apparently engaged in earnest conversation; while my father's brother was busying himself with sprinkling cologne on the car-

pet. It seemed that in the bustle and confusion of the moment, my unexpected arrival had not been noticed by any one in the room; and I was just about to inquire of a stranger, whose funeral this was, when I suddenly awoke. Although only half an hour had passed since I had retired, this dream agitated and worried me so much, that I could not fall asleep again that morning. Like most whaling-men, I was in the habit of making daily records, or, as we sailors call it, of 'writing up a log.' I therefore made an entry on my book, giving the substance of my dream, and noticing the day and hour. I staid on that trip about eighteen months; and, after a very successful voyage, our ship returned to New Bedford, and safely landed at Taber's Wharf on the twelfth day of October, eighteen hundred and forty-four. My brother was the first to greet me; and, after exchanging a few hasty words with him, I asked him if any thing new had happened at home, to which he hesitatingly replied, 'Oh no!' The weather still being very mild, I proposed to walk home, instead of taking a carriage. I was just asking a question regarding the health of my father, when the active old gentleman himself hastily approached us; and, after giving me a hearty welcome, we three walked up Union Street together. It seemed to me as if all the inhabitants of our town had already been informed of the arrival of 'The Orazimbo,' for there were anxious faces at nearly every window; but we took little notice of them, although we knew them nearly all. On passing the house of one of our intimate acquaintances, however, I accidentally noticed the two daughters looking at

me with such a pitiful and sympathizing expression of their otherwise cheerful faces, that I instantly knew that something was wrong at our house. Looking inquiringly at my father, the kind old gentleman seemed to read my thoughts at once, for he said,—

“‘I suppose you have already heard of your sister’s illness?’

“‘Not a word,’ I quickly replied, ‘but something tells me that she is dead.’ And sure enough, so she was; and they made no further attempt to deceive me about it. Grieved on hearing the sad news, I impatiently hastened to the house, and then and there learned, to my great surprise, that the day and hour of my dear sister’s death, allowing the difference of time between our city and the Western Islands, corresponded exactly with the memorandum made by me at the time; and furthermore, that all the events as they had appeared in my dream, even to the sprinkling of the cologne by my uncle, had actually transpired during the performance of the funeral ceremonies, and were, in all their details, witnessed by the members of the family, and they can tell you so. And thus, you see, my friends, my dream was truly realized.”

The company had listened with intense interest to the captain’s wonderful story; and now, when he had finished, no one dared to applaud; but many expressed their feelings of gratitude by words of sympathy, while the tender-hearted old gentleman himself was moved to tears, and silently responded by shaking hands with those who approached him.

It was yet early in the evening, and we continued our entertainment until a late hour; but, fearing that a full description of it might tire you, I will merely say, that every one of the company contributed a share to the amusements of the occasion, and when the midnight hour approached, the party broke up; and then, after once more congratulating our host and hostess, I bade them all good-night, and on the way to my lodgings I could not help pondering over our friend's strange story.

THE LIVING STATUE.

AMONG the manifold works of art exhibited in Philadelphia at the Centennial Exposition of 1876, there was, in the Annex of the Memorial Hall, in the Italian Department, a statue entitled, "Modestia" (Modesty), by A. Bottinelli, of Rome.

A similar statue, bearing the same name, was exhibited by a young French artist at the World's Exposition, in Paris, in 1867; and the strange history connected with that speechless block of marble is still so fresh in my memory, as to enable me to relate to you, dear reader, the facts, with all the details belonging thereto.

Having been intimately acquainted with the hero of my story, I shall not be in danger of misrepresenting or exaggerating any part thereof.

My friend, whose name was Paul Rochelle, was a fine-looking young man, of affable manners, then twenty-five years of age, well educated and of good family, full of true genius, and equally full of hope and aspiration. I became acquainted with him while on a visit to Paris in the spring of 1866; and I shall never forget the lovely Sunday morning when he excitedly entered my room at the hotel, and, in terms of ecstasy, told me of a beautiful dream that he had

had on the previous night, in which he beheld the personification of loveliness which henceforth he was bound to adopt as his ideal of womanhood; and that already, at daybreak, he had made a pencil-sketch of the subject, and was eager to learn what I thought of it. Unrolling a sheet of drawing-paper, he said, —

“Now, then, you have seen beauty in the New World as well in the Old, and therefore are capable of judging rightly: pray look at this sketch, and then tell me if ever you beheld a sweeter expression than this.”

I looked at his drawing, and really was so favorably impressed with it, that I exclaimed, “A perfect Venus, I must confess.”

“A Venus?” he repeated. “Oh, no! nothing of the kind: my idea of a Venus is a more startling beauty, while this is merely a combination of loveliness and modesty.”

I looked at his sketch once more. “You are right,” said I. “Modesty surely is the most prominent characteristic expressed in these features; and I think that I myself could easily fall in love with the woman who should possess the qualities pictured here.”

“Well, then,” said he, “I have accepted the dream as a visitation and inspiration from Heaven. I shall make a life-size statue from this drawing; and if God spares me, I mean to finish it before the opening of the Exposition. And now, my dear friend, I must leave you. Probably you will not see much of me while I have this work in hand, but you are welcome to call at my studio at any time; and I shall

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be but too happy to have you watch the progress of the statue, and by your criticism keep me from getting self-conceited."

I promised to visit him at his studio whenever my time permitted; and so I did for many subsequent months.

The work progressed rapidly; and when, in October of the same year, I left Paris to embark at Havre for New York, I had fully made up my mind that the statue would be a success. Nor was I mistaken; for when, in 1867, about two months before the opening of the great Exposition, I returned to Paris, I found that the work was completed, and, as I thought, equal, if not superior, to any thing of that kind I had ever seen.

My first visit to my friend's studio, after my return from America, was connected with a little romance which I can not help relating, as I think it will interest you. Rochelle had his room on the third floor of a large building in the Rue Turbigo. It was about twilight when I ascended the spacious steps leading thereto. My friend was not aware of my arrival; and I fancied how surprised he would be to see me so unexpectedly. Gently I rapped at the door, but received no answer from within. I rapped again and louder, but no "*Entrez*" reached my ear: the room was not locked, for the key was on the outside. My friend could not have removed, for there was the familiar sign still nailed to the door. The temptation was too great to let the opportunity pass. Undoubtedly Rochelle had gone out for a few moments, and had left the key in the

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door, as he was in the habit of doing. I concluded to make the surprise still greater, by entering his room during his absence, and by hiding behind some furniture or curtain until he returned.

What did I behold on entering? My first glance met the the wonderfully fascinating statue, representing Modesty. It was, indeed, a grand work of art. Instinctively I removed my hat; and for more than ten minutes I was actually lost in admiration, noticing nothing but that angelic face and graceful form, which now I could never more forget. When at length my gaze reluctantly left the marble, I saw before it, in an easy-chair, with eyes closed and hands folded, as in fervent prayer, my friend, fast asleep, bearing on his handsome face the sweetest and happiest of smiles. On a small table, among letters and writing materials, I noticed sundry slips of pink-tinted paper, upon which short verses were inscribed in Rochelle's handwriting. One of these slips had fallen from the table. I stooped to pick it up. I never knew that he was a poet. Being myself somewhat gifted in that direction, a feeling of curiosity induced me to read the lines. Of course they were written in French; but, as I have recently made an attempt to translate them into English, I trust that you, dear reader, will pardon my arrogance in giving you my own version of those characteristic lines, the substance of which is contained in the following:—

“To thee alone, sweet vision of my dream,
My future life devoted now does seem.
Creation of my hand and of my brain,
To see thee move and speak I hope in vain.

Night follows day, and day does follow night;
And every moment brings me new delight.
Thou read'st my heart, and sweetly smil'st at me
Thy virgin smile, O dearest Modesty!
How can with such a bliss I ever part?
This is reality instead of art.
O, Ideal dear! I worship at thy shrine;
For thou art mine alone, and only mine!"

I was deeply touched by the outpouring of his poetical heart through these inspired and inspiring lines. There was no doubt that Rochelle was desperately in love with his ideal. I now felt ashamed and guilty for having pried into his secrets. Replacing the document again on the floor, where I found it, I silently left the room. My friend was still asleep, and I would have considered it a sin to disturb his happy slumber.

The next morning I again called at the studio. Rochelle expressed himself delighted to see me.

"When did you arrive?" asked he.

"Yesterday," replied I reluctantly.

"And only came to see me to-day!" exclaimed he, reproachfully.

I was tempted to tell him the truth, but my courage failed me.

"Be seated," said he, "and look at my statue. I am ready for your criticism."

What could I say to him, when I already knew from his verses what *he* thought of it; and while I felt that I myself had fallen in love with the marble heart, I was forced by my own conviction to speak of his work in the highest terms, which seemed to

please and encourage him, while he listened attentively to every word I said. After I had finished, he exclaimed, —

“Oh! I am so glad that *you* are pleased with it. The fact is, that I am so wrapped up in my work, that, should there be any defects in it, I would be entirely blind to them. But *your* verdict is sufficient, and now I shall not care if everybody else condemns it. I confess I can hardly await the day when I shall be permitted to place it before the eyes of the public; and yet I dread the hour when she, — I mean Modesty — will leave the studio, for she has been such a source of comfort and consolation to me. I could speak to her as to a dear friend, and she seemed to understand me so well. Do not think that I have lost my reason. You are my dearest friend. I have no secrets from you. Let me, then, confess to you, that I am desperately and hopelessly in love with my ideal.”

He spoke enthusiastically, and I noticed that his eyes were moistened when he exclaimed, —

“Oh! I am to be pitied, as well as to be envied!”

I knew it all, and I pitied him from the bottom of my heart.

The opening day of the great Exposition arrived at last, and gay Paris wore her gayest attire. Flags of all nations floated from the roofs and windows of richly festooned houses. The air re-echoed with music, and in the streets and on the grounds one could hear almost every modern language spoken by the pleasure-seekers.

The inauguration ceremonies being over, the mul-

titudes now rushed in different directions, to see such sights as best suited their tastes and purposes, while I went in search of my friend, whom I found at his post, near the statue, surrounded by a group of ladies and gentlemen, who gave vent to their feelings of admiration in various expressions, as follows:—

“What a lovely face this is, and what an appropriate name it bears!” said a young lady to her escort. “It is strange I never heard of the artist. I wonder where his studio is?”

“Modesty, by Jove!” exclaimed a stylish looking Englishman, addressing his friend, “if really there is such a thing, you know.”

“My dear,” said a stout, pompous-looking old gentleman to his fair companion, “this beats every thing we have seen so far. It is a masterly piece of workmanship. I wonder what value is fixed upon it. I would like to own it.”

Two young gentlemen, each wearing a small American flag fastened to the lapel of his coat, now approached.

“Charley, I venture to say this statue will draw a prize,” said one of them.

“You bet it will,” said the other.

My friend and myself were engaged in conversation; but I am confident that he, as well as I, heard every thing that was said. I was greatly pleased on his account, for he surely deserved honor and encouragement; yet, knowing of his dream, I could not help feeling that his success was the gift of a power beyond his own.

Day after day, and week after week, crowds of art-

loving people filled the spacious hall, and day after day the statue was surrounded and praised by connoisseurs and art-critics. Even the daily and weekly papers spoke of it in the highest terms, and a photograph taken from the statue found an unlimited and unprecedented sale. Surely Rochelle was much to be envied. I saw him almost every day, and I knew that his young heart was then filled with gratitude towards God as well as towards mankind.

Alas! poor dear Paul! The sunshine of his life was not to last for ever.

Fancy a cloudy and oppressive day, and me sitting in my room at the hotel, perusing letters recently received from my friends in New York. Suddenly and unexpectedly, contrary to his rule without first rapping at the door, Rochelle excitedly enters my room, and, without offering any apology, rushes upon me with the exclamation,—

"She lives, she lives! My dream has become reality. I have seen my ideal in flesh and blood. She is all I fancied her to be in face, in form and in speech. Pardon me, my dear friend, if I have interrupted or frightened you. My mind is wandering. May the Lord have mercy on me!"

Thus saying, he threw himself on a lounge; and, alternately laughing and crying, he fell into a fit of hysterics, while I was grieved and shocked, fancying him to be in the first stages of lunacy. I deeply sympathized with him, and tried my utmost to console him; begging of him, at the same time, to explain to me the cause of this strange outburst of emotion. After he felt more composed he said,—

"I hope you are not angry at me for my rudeness. I will tell you all. Just listen:—

"This noon, on returning from my lunch at the usual hour, I noticed from a distance a young lady examining my work very closely. Approaching her, I found to my greatest surprise and delight, that in face and form she was the very image of my statue, and hence the concentration of all my hopes of happiness on earth. I do not know whether a good or evil spirit prompted me to speak to her; but so I did, even without an introduction, and at the risk of being repelled by her. I first handed her my card. She compared the name with the one on the pedestal of the statue, and then smilingly said,—

"‘Ah, you are the artist! Will you be kind enough to inform me where you found your model?’

"‘Certainly, mademoiselle,’ said I: ‘I found it in a dream more than a year ago. Since then I have wished and hoped for the realization of this dream, for the personification of my ideal; and now, thank Heaven! I have found it; and at this blessed moment I am standing before it, hardly able to comprehend that this is not again a dream, but a reality.’

"The young lady blushed, and then said,—

"‘I confess that I noticed the resemblance between your statue and myself the very moment I looked at it; but we women are so vain, I thought that I might be mistaken, and that perhaps others would not notice the likeness as I had done.’

"She was about to say more, when an elderly lady hastily approached her, exclaiming,—

"‘Hortense, my child! I have been looking for

you nearly half an hour. I declare, there is the very statue, a photograph of which I have bought, because it looked so much like you. The resemblance is still more striking in the marble. I wish your husband was able to buy it for you.'

"This was all I heard; for the word *husband* had sent a dagger through my heart, and made me feel so faint, that I had to lean against the statue, to keep me from falling. When I looked up again, both ladies had disappeared, and other strangers were looking at poor Modesty. Oh! what will become of me? I have found my ideal, and have lost it again. My life is blighted. My hopes are buried, and I shall lose my reason!"

What could I say to the poor fellow? What argument could I urge? What consolation could I offer? Surely my heart was bleeding for him.

From that day he visited me but twice a week, and he appeared to have grown irritable and despondent. He began to look pale and haggard, and spoke but very little. I tried my utmost to cheer him up, but failed in my endeavors.

One evening, I think it was about two weeks previous to the closing of the Exhibition, Rochelle quietly entered my room, and, after seating himself, he addressed me as follows:—

"You have been a true and devoted friend to me, and now I will test your friendship still further. I came to borrow one of your pistols. It will probably be the last favor I shall ask of you, and therefore I hope that you will grant it."

"For Heaven's sake, Paul, what are you going to do?" exclaimed I excitedly.

"Nothing rash, but something unavoidable," replied he calmly.

"Explain yourself, if you please," said I sharply.

"Oh! it is merely an affair of honor, that is all," replied he. "The husband of Hortense, whose name is Leroi, has seen the statue. He insists that his wife has served me as a model; accuses her of infidelity, and me of being her paramour; and, as he probably loves her as much as I do, he is bound to revenge her honor, as well as that of his house, and therefore has challenged me to fight a duel. You, being a man of honor, will easily see that I am forced to accept the challenge, while I have a strange presentiment that I shall fall a victim to his wrath. Should this prove true, I have one more and last favor to ask of you, which is, that on receiving the news of my death, you will be kind and merciful enough to demolish, with your own hands, the ill-fated statue which has given me life as well as death. And here is the legal document, conveying to you in such case the sole ownership of that heartless block of marble, together with the copyright of the photograph taken therefrom."

I had silently, and almost breathlessly, listened to his sad story; and now, seeing by the delivery of the document to me, that he was in full earnest, I sympathizingly said, —

"I deeply regret the unfortunate issue of Leroi's unwarranted jealousy, but I fully agree with you in the point of honor. You are bound to accept the challenge, or be stamped a coward; but, if it should be your fate to fall in the encounter, you shall at

least die in the arms and on the bosom of a true friend. I myself will act as your second, and will send a note to that effect to Leroi at once; and you shall hear from me again to-morrow."

Rochelle quietly thanked me, and then left the room. I immediately addressed a few lines to his enemy, requesting him to furnish me with the name of his second. Leroi promptly replied. The next day I met the party, a military-looking gentleman by the name of Dupond. We agreed as to the weapons to be used, our choice being pistols, and made all other preliminary arrangements regarding the duel.

Three days afterwards, on a Friday, the encounter took place in a secluded spot about eight miles south of Paris. The distance between the combatants having been measured, the duellists awaited the signal, it having been agreed upon that both should fire at the same time. Leroi, who, as I afterwards learned, had the reputation of being a good marksman, on this occasion was so very nervous and excited, that he missed his opponent by two inches. Rochelle had aimed at the same time, but surprised and deceived us all by first hesitating a few moments and then intentionally firing into the air. I felt disappointed at his strange and unaccountable conduct, and was just about to reproach him for his apparent indifference, when his blood-thirsty enemy, with the eyes and fury of a tiger, suddenly fell upon my unfortunate friend, and would have probably strangled him to death, had it not been for my timely interference. Seeing that he had found in me his superior in

strength, the madman abandoned his murderous design; and, after giving vent to his feelings by a shower of curses and maledictions on both of us, he and his second entered the coach which had conveyed them to the battle-ground, and drove off.

"What possessed you, Paul, to let that wretch escape unpunished?" exclaimed I, when we were left alone. To which my friend replied, —

"Oh! how could I deprive *her* of the object of her affection, and the supporting hand of a husband. I hoped he would not miss his aim, and thus end my wretched existence."

We drove back to the city without exchanging another word. He was wrapped up in thoughts of the gloomy future; while I was admiring his noble conduct, and wondering whether *I* would have acted so generously had I been in his place.

Soon afterwards the great Exposition was brought to a close. The statue was bought by an English lord for a large sum. Rochelle took the money, and went to Rome a week before I returned to America. I occasionally heard from him, but all his letters bore the stamp of melancholy, and he frequently spoke as though life had no longer any charms for him.

About two years had elapsed since the strange termination of the duel, when one day I received a letter from Paul, dated at Rome, which read as follows: —

"MY DEAR FRIEND, — A short time ago I received from my correspondent in Paris the information that Hortense's husband, who had become a raving maniac on the subject of his wife's supposed infidelity, had recently died in the insane asylum. I am now preparing to return to Paris to claim the hand

of his widow. If it is God's will, I may yet be happy. You shall hear from me again, after my arrival in France.

"Yours sincerely,

"PAUL ROCHELLE."

Four months later I received from him another message, dated at Paris, which was as follows : —

"MY DEAR AND ONLY FRIEND, — I returned to Paris two weeks ago, but now I wish that I had remained in Italy; for on my arrival here, I found that Hortense, having been left unprovided for by her husband, had sought shelter in a convent. As she remains a novice until the expiration of two years, I immediately requested an interview, which was granted to me under certain conditions and restrictions, exacted by the order; but I had the great happiness of beholding that blessed face once more. Need I tell you how urgently I *pleaded* my case, and how hard it was for me to control the language which my love-inspired heart prompted? With a sad smile that foretold my dreadful fate, she listened until I had finished. She seemed to prepare her answer while I was speaking, for it followed as promptly as the thunder-clap follows the lightning; and every syllable of those hope-destroying words fell so plainly and distinctly upon my ear, that, were I to live a thousand years, I could *never* forget them.

" ' I deeply sympathize with you,' said she, ' in your disappointment, nor have I forgotten your noble conduct at the duel; but I can never be your wife. Until you crossed my path, my life had been a quiet and happy one; but almost from the moment I looked upon your statue, my misery began. I attach no blame to you; but I could never overcome the feeling of dislike which I have taken to you, though you are but the innocent cause of my misfortunes. My resolutions are unalterable. The world has no charms for me. I shall not leave this sacred spot until God calls me to that better land where sorrow and misfortune are unknown. I must now leave you to your grief, if such you really feel. The time limiting our interview is nearly spent. Farewell, for ever ! and may Heaven have mercy on us both ! ' "

"She made a motion to leave me. I could no longer master my feelings: despair had taken possession of my heart. Involuntarily sinking on my knees before her, I violently seized her hands to press them to my lips, when she angrily withdrew them, and hastily disappeared.

"At the same time the convent-bell, in solemn tones, rang out the hour of service. A magic power seemed to fasten me to the spot. Claspng my hands in fervent prayer, I implored God to let me die on the sacred ground, made still more sacred by her presence; but He who rules our destinies did not see fit to grant my prayer.

"Five minutes afterwards I left the gloomy place that shut me out from hope and happiness for ever. My life is blighted, my health is impaired. May God grant me an early death! I long to go to the better world, where I hope to find the ideal of my life.

"Farewell. May Heaven bless you, and may you ever kindly remember your unfortunate friend,

"PAUL ROCHELLE."

My heart sank within me when I read the sad letter.

Ten weeks afterwards I learned that he had died at his parents' house in the Rue St. Denis.

Poor, dear Paul! I shall never forget him. He has left a world of care and disappointment, hoping to meet his dear Hortense at some future time among the gentle spirits in the bright Hereafter.

May he realize his hopes, and may his soul rejoice in the reunion! Amen!

TWO YEARS IN DARKNESS.

IN my younger years I was passionately fond of reading. I swallowed all sorts of novels by the bushel; and, when I think of it now, it seems to me that I have lost just as many hours of my life as I then spent in perusing those volumes of fiction.

I really ought to be the last man in this world to make such an assertion, as I myself am now writing a book, of which the following is the last of the twelve stories comprising the contents of my humble work.

At the age of sixteen I boarded with a married sister of mine, in the city of Hamburg, in Germany. I occupied a cozy little room, the walls of which were decorated in the German fashion, by being covered with canvas, upon which the paper was pasted. Not being able to devote any time to reading during the day, I adopted the unwise and dangerous practice of reading in bed at night, and often until morning. My sister, as well as her husband, strongly objected to this; and, as there was no gas in the house, they positively refused to furnish me with light after ten o'clock in the evening, thus trying to force me into obedience to their will. I remember distinctly that when my brother-in-law, speaking also in behalf of his good wife, told me of their joint resolution, I had

just finished the third volume of Eugene Sue's interesting novel, entitled, "The Mysteries of Paris;" and, as I was determined to read the remaining nine volumes of the work, I had to devise a plan of my own in order to accomplish my design: nor did it take me very long to arrive at the conclusion, not to revolt openly against their decree, but to mislead my dear relatives by apparent submission to their wish, and then, unbeknown to them, to provide myself with a sperm candle, a candlestick, and a pair of snuffers. So thought, so done. I had no trouble in smuggling these few articles into the house, and then into my room, where I kept them concealed during the day. My plan worked admirably; and my deceit would probably never have been discovered, had it not been for an accident, which threw a little too much light on my wrong-doings, and nearly proved fatal to me, as well as to the other inmates of the house. You will undoubtedly call me very imprudent, when I confess to you, that after retiring at night, I was in the habit of placing the candlestick, containing a burning candle, on a low chair, occupying the small space between the bedstead and the wall. Well, the upshot of the matter was, that one night I fell asleep while reading a translation of a French novel, entitled "Le Diable boiteux," or "The Limping Devil," and came pretty near to being roasted alive; for when I awoke from a feeling of suffocation, the wall-paper was on fire, and the room was filled with a dense smoke, rendering it almost impossible for me to breathe. Fortunately I had presence of mind enough not to raise an alarm, but by the aid of wet

towels to extinguish the smoldering fire, and then by opening the windows, to admit fresh air into the room, after which I felt relieved in thinking that all danger was over. I made no mention of the occurrence at the breakfast-table ; but, after my brother-in-law had left the house, I told my sister what had happened. I shall never forget her look of indignation, and my feeling of regret and shame ; nor could I ever forget the book, which, by falling on and upsetting the lighted candle, had caused all the mischief. And an interesting book it really was. It told of a limping devil, flying over cities and villages, occasionally alighting on the roofs of houses, and invisibly creeping and peeping through skylights, or chimneys, thus, unseen and unheard, looking behind the scenes of domestic life, sometimes of happiness, but oftener of misery. The idea was so novel to me, and so well suited to my own desire and inclination to study human nature as an unobserved observer, that even now, after having lived in America for a number of years, the desire of playing the part of an indiscreet spirit, as described by the author of "*Le Diable boiteux*," has not yet left me nor abated. Is it, therefore, to be wondered at, that I felt greatly interested, when one evening, involuntarily and unexpectedly, I found myself, although not limping, in a similar position to that assumed by the aforesaid dark-complexioned gentleman with the cloven-foot. I am not certain as to the exact date ; but I am positive that it was after ten o'clock, on a bitter cold night in February, eighteen hundred and sixty-three, when, after having visited a destitute German family, for whom I had made a collection among my friends,

I had just descended the narrow stairway, leading from the fourth to the third floor of a tenement-house in Avenue B, New York, when on reaching the hall, a shriek of anguish, followed by the exclamation, "Good heavens, I am blind!" reached my ear, and caused me to pause at the door of the room from which the voice had issued. By the dim light of a small lamp standing on a shelf in the entry, I noticed a sign on the door, bearing the inscription:

Henry Engelhardt,

TEACHER OF PIANO AND SINGING.

My sympathy was strongly and strangely aroused by the tone of despair in which those few but terrible words were uttered; and therefore it was but natural that I lingered at the door, expecting to find out something more of the matter. I listened attentively, but could hear only a subdued sobbing, intermingled with a fervent prayer, asking God for relief. It was a man that was suffering and praying, and a German at that. Could I aid or comfort him in any way? My heart and hand were willing and ready to do so. Why should I hesitate, and consider formalities, when I might be of some service to him?

Following the impulse of the moment, I rapped at the door.

"Who is there?" shouted a voice from within; and at the same time the door was locked and bolted.

"You do not know me: I am a stranger," said I hesitatingly.

"Why, then, do you trouble me at this late hour of

the night? Are you a robber, who has already found out my helpless condition, and who wants to take advantage of it?" said the unfortunate and suspicious man.

"I am no robber, but one of your countrymen. I have heard your cry of anguish, and I merely came to inquire if I could render you any assistance," said I mildly.

"Then, in the name of God, come in and be welcome," said he, hastily opening the door for me. I entered the room. Expecting to find a home of poverty, I was forcibly struck with and agreeably surprised by the neatness, taste, and refinement visible, not only in the furniture and carpet, but in every other article contained in the room and adjoining bedroom, the door of which was wide open. A Steinway piano was the principal attraction in the room. But no! — I am mistaken: it might have been the most costly, but it was by no means the most attractive object visible; for such surely was a life-size portrait of a young lady of rare beauty, a face so noble and so sweet that one could never forget it. It represented a healthy-looking blonde, aged about twenty-four, with dark-blue eyes, a well-formed nose, a small mouth, and ruby lips. Entering the room, I apologized to Mr. Engelhardt — for such he was — for intruding into his sanctum, begging of him, at the same time, to look upon me as a sympathizing friend. No sooner had I spoken these words, than I discovered that I had blundered; for, bursting into tears, he said in a sad tone, —

"Oh that I could be permitted to look upon you

and upon her! but I have lost my sight. What will she say and do when she hears of it? What will become of me and of her? How could I support, how comfort her, blind and helpless as I have now become?"

"It then seems that you are married?" said I inquiringly.

"No, sir! Thank Heaven! I am not married yet," said he quickly; "but I am engaged to an angel, a girl as you rarely find one. There hangs her portrait over the piano. It is a good likeness of her; and, if you have studied physiognomy, you may judge for yourself what a treasure she would be to the man who adores her and who understands how to appreciate her. We have known each other for five years. She has been my happiness and my hope, nor is she entirely unprepared for the great misfortune that has befallen me. My eyes have been exceedingly weak for a year past, and my physician often told me that I would eventually lose the use of them, if I persisted in straining them by teaching and practicing so late at night. But how could I avoid it? We were to be married next May; and it required a handsome sum of money to go to housekeeping and to defray all the other expenses attending our wedding. It was for her dear sake that I toiled day and night. To make her comfortable and happy has been the sole aim of my life since first I met her. I hoped that God would not crush me as he has done. But it is all over with my happiness now. I will not draw her down with me into poverty and misery! I will release her from her vows! I will bury my fondest hopes, and try to teach myself to forget her!"

He was sitting in an easy-chair with his head reclining on the back of the chair, while he spoke those sad words of despair. I had a good chance to study his features, which were striking and handsome. Only once before had I met a person with such a marked and expressive countenance, and that was General Pike, a Southern gentleman, with whom, some years ago, I became slightly acquainted on my way from New Orleans to Memphis. Engelhardt was of dark complexion. He had an oval face, a Roman nose, dark-brown eyes, long, black hair, and a heavy but graceful moustache. Altogether he looked more like a Frenchman than a German. His language indicated a cultivated mind; and his voice was clear and deep, like that of an Italian opera-singer. He was of middling height, well proportioned, and had a military bearing. I felt deeply interested in the unfortunate man; but, remembering the lateness of the hour, I inquired if I could be of any service to him.

"You could," replied he; "but I have no right to burden you with a message, and I fear that I have already imposed on your good-nature by telling you what in fact could not interest you."

"Mr. Engelhardt," said I, "it is but just that you should know who I am before you confide in me any further." I then gave him my name.

"Is it possible?" exclaimed he. "Oh! I have heard of you before from my neighbors up stairs, to whom you have been so kind. Now I am sure that I have found a sympathizing friend."

"Well, then, if you think that you can place con-

fidence in me, please tell me how I can serve you," said I firmly.

"You can do nothing for me to-night," replied he; "but if you would be good enough to procure for me, in the morning, an intelligent boy, ten or twelve years old, who can read and write well, and send him to me as early as possible, you would greatly oblige me."

"I will do so with pleasure," said I, taking his right hand and pressing it; "but is there nothing else you desire me to do for you?"

"Nothing, sir," said he, "except—But, no! I will not trouble you with that."

My curiosity probably equalled my sympathy, when I exclaimed,—

"I shall insist upon your telling me what you mean."

"Well," said Engelhardt reluctantly, "this is Friday. On Sunday night she will expect me. She must therefore be informed of my misfortune before that time. I am blind, and can not write to her. I thought you might be the most suitable person to broach the sad subject to her; but I fear it would be asking too much of you."

"Give me the name and address of the young lady, and I will see her to-morrow," said I.

"Her name is Ida Luther," replied he. "She is an orphan, and lives with her aunt, Mrs. Weis, at No. —, East Tenth Street. She teaches in a school during the week; but to-morrow being Saturday, you will probably find her at home."

"All right," said I, taking leave of my blind

friend: "you shall hear from me again before to-morrow evening, and I will send you a boy early in the morning. Good-night."

"Good-night, and God's blessing for your kindness!" said Engelhardt, accompanying me to the door, which he locked and bolted once more.

It was just eleven o'clock when I reached the street. The night was cold and clear. The full moon shone brightly, the stars twinkled roguishly in the dark blue sky; but there was now one more unfortunate on earth who could not behold the glory of the Lord in his great and marvelous works. God pity the blind!

"It seems to me that I was born to meet with all sorts of strange adventures," said I to myself, while I was waiting for the street-car to ride home. I almost wished at that moment that I had not taken any active part in the matter. But this selfish thought was soon superseded by a kinder and nobler feeling, and a firm resolution to befriend and aid the poor man as much as it was in my power. The next morning I started out early, to engage a boy for my friend. I had not the slightest trouble in finding one, as I knew exactly where to apply; and I found about a dozen lads ready and willing to take the position for a trifling compensation. I selected the neatest and cleanest of them, a boy by the name of Franz Lucas, whom I sent to Engelhardt for approval. In the afternoon of the same day, I gathered courage enough to call on Miss Luther. On ringing the bell at her house, I heard hasty footsteps in the hall; and a few minutes afterwards the door was

opened by a portly lady with gray curls, who appeared somewhat surprised at beholding a stranger, while she asked, —

“Whom do you wish to see, sir?”

“Miss Luther, if you please,” said I politely, at the same time handing her my card.

“Please walk into the parlor. I will call my niece,” said the lady.

I entered the parlor. Almost the first thing I noticed was an imperial-size photograph of Engelhardt, in a gilt frame, which stood on the mantle-piece. No wonder the fair Ida had fallen in love with those handsome eyes, which now were closed to her for ever. A light step on the stairway, the rustle of a dress, and then Miss Luther stood wonderingly before me. I was struck with her beauty, which was heightened by the plainness of her attire, consisting of a tight-fitting gray merino dress. Bowing to her, she begged me to be seated; which I did, saying, —

“Miss Luther, I have called upon you in behalf of Mr. Henry Engelhardt, and as his friend.”

“If you are Mr. Engelhardt’s friend, and he is yours, how happened it that he never mentioned your name to me?” said the lady quietly.

“Our acquaintance has been but short,” said I with some embarrassment, feeling that her large blue eyes were steadily fixed on mine.

“When and where did you last see Mr. Engelhardt? How was he when you left him, and what message do you bear to me from him?” asked the lady sternly.

If a shrewd lawyer had cross-examined me on the witness-stand, in a complicated murder-case, his questions could not have been more clear and pointed than those of Miss Luther.

"I saw him last night between ten and eleven o'clock at his own room: he was not feeling quite well; his eyes troubled him, and prevented him from writing to you, for which reason he requested me to call upon you, and ask you to excuse him from spending to-morrow evening with you, as you probably expected him to do," said I, watching the effect my words had upon her.

"Is this all you wish to say to me?" inquired Miss Luther.

"This is all," said I hesitatingly.

"It is false!" exclaimed the lady, in an angry voice. "Let me tell you, sir, that this is not all you came to say to me. I am not a child, but a woman; and I know and feel that you are concealing something from me, and that you are only preparing me for some dreadful news regarding Engelhardt, who is my best and dearest friend and my affianced husband. I bear a stout heart within me, and I must learn the truth from you at once."

There was a firmness and grandeur in her commanding voice, which made me feel that I could deceive her no longer.

"Well, then," said I, with a sad and trembling voice, "your friend fears he may lose his eyesight ere long."

"Or, rather, has lost it already?" said Miss Luther inquiringly.

"Alas! it is as you say," replied I, while tears were forcing themselves to my eyes. She noticed my emotion; and, arising from her seat, she quickly approached me, and, taking my right hand in her own, she said in a tender tone, —

"Pardon my rash words, sir: I now feel that you are his friend as well as mine. Go, hasten to him: tell him to keep up a brave heart, and not despair. Say to him that I will send him a guide, until I can serve him as such myself before the world. Tell him that I will cling to him in weal and woe, through light and darkness, and that I have saved enough from my earnings as a teacher to keep us both from want for more than a year. Go, please, tell him all this, and say to him, also, that my aunt and myself will call upon him this evening."

I looked at her with admiration, while she spoke these kind and encouraging words. "Did ever there live a nobler girl than this?" asked I of myself.

I knew of a case in my native city, where a rich young man was engaged to be married to a lovely girl, who after their engagement became blind from the effects of scarlet fever. The man refused to marry her; and his heartlessness so affected the unfortunate girl, that she lost her reason, and died a raving maniac at the age of twenty.

I was about to take leave of Miss Luther, when it occurred to me that she might be pleased to learn that I had already procured a guide for her friend. I therefore informed her of it; and I could see that it gladdened her heart, for she exclaimed, "Thank God! then the poor man is not alone and helpless."

It was nearly dark when I left the noble girl, and wended my way to Avenue B. When I rapped at Engelhardt's door, he was playing the piano, but the music he had chosen was as sad and plaintive as Beethoven's Funeral March. It ceased: the boy Franz opened the door, and announced me to his master. The blind man arose hastily, and, guided by the sound of my footsteps, approached me, saying,—

“Be welcome, sir! Have you seen her?”

I told him every thing that Miss Luther had said; and he seemed to inhale every word, for he was breathing heavily while I spoke. When I finished he exclaimed, “The noble girl! God bless her! but she shall not be sacrificed for my sake.”

I did not understand the meaning of these last words at the time, but they were made clear to me in the course of events connected with this story. Noticing Engelhardt's agitation while he spoke, I tried to turn the conversation by inquiring how the boy suited him.

“I think he will answer, and I am greatly obliged to you; but I may not require his services very long,” said Engelhardt.

Again I was at a loss to comprehend the meaning of his remark; and, although it puzzled me a little, I asked no explanation, for fear of irritating him. Not wishing to be present at the interview between the unfortunate man and his betrothed, I left soon afterwards, promising to see him again shortly. From that day I called on him at least three times a week; and I found him to be very agreeable, interesting, and highly educated. He spoke English, French, Ger-

man, and Italian very fluently, having at his command the choicest words in either tongue; and he had corresponded in all these languages before he lost the use of his eyes. In addition to these accomplishments, he was a thorough musician, playing several instruments besides the piano, while his voice was a deep and melodious baritone, of great compass. During my visits at his room, he often entertained me by singing and playing for me; and on various occasions I met Miss Luther and her aunt there.

Engelhardt seemed gradually to submit to his terrible fate, and at times even appeared cheerful and gay; but I noticed one thing which I did not altogether fancy; and that was, that in the presence of his lovely and amiable betrothed he seemed embarrassed, despondent, dull, and absent-minded, when, in fact, her presence ought to have produced an entirely different effect upon him. I could not account for his strange conduct on those occasions; and the more I pondered over it, the more it seemed to me as if Engelhardt's conscience was troubled by a feeling of remorse, for some wrong which he had done, or contemplated doing, to the noble and unsuspecting girl. Being a close observer of human nature, and calling to my mind various strange remarks incautiously uttered by the blind man, this conviction forced itself so strongly upon my thoughts, that, I may well say, it worried me more than I was willing to admit, even to myself. Engelhardt, notwithstanding his great affliction, had much to be thankful for. In the first place, he had lost but very few of his pupils, and even assured me that he felt himself more competent to

teach than ever before, as now not the slightest sound escaped his notice. In the second place, he ought to have been endlessly happy in the thought, that the girl of his choice, noble, brave, and self-sacrificing in her nature, never entertained the remotest thought of abandoning, on account of his infirmity, the man whom she loved and respected. In the third place, Mrs. Weis, not less kind and generous than her niece, had promised to the latter a complete and elegant outfit, and furthermore volunteered to defray all expenses of the wedding and a short tour to Niagara Falls; while another relative of the young lady insisted upon furnishing for them a suite of rooms, regardless of expense, and the wedding was already fixed upon. In fact, every thing seemed to work in favor of the young couple; and yet I had a strange and unaccountable presentiment, that some ominous cloud was hovering over the horizon of their happiness, threatening at any moment to burst upon their heads. Whether or not I was wrong in my apprehensions, you will soon ascertain. Only have a little patience, dear reader.

A teacher once asked a stupid boy in school, where the thunder and lightning came from; and the boy replied, that it came out of his grandmother's bones, for at a recent thunder-storm he had heard her say that she had felt it in her bones for several days.

I experienced a sensation similar to that described by the venerable lady, when one stormy evening, after eleven o'clock, a loud and quickly repeated ring at the door-bell disturbed my slumbers, and caused

me to jump out of bed, and hasten to the window to learn what was wanted.

"Who is there?" asked I.

"I have a letter for you, sir, which requires an immediate answer," said a clear voice.

"All right. Wait a moment, until I come down," replied I.

Gathering a few necessary garments, and slipping them on in a hurry, I hastened to the door, where I met a strange boy, who handed me a note. Lighting the gas in the hall, I read the following message, addressed to me:—

"DEAR SIR,— Pardon me for disturbing you at this late hour. As my friend, and a friend of Engelhardt, I implore you to call on me instantly, in order to consult with me regarding a very important matter concerning that unfortunate man.

"Yours, very respectfully,

"IDA LUTHER."

Folding the note, I felt I was shivering like a leaf. Whether it was the chill of the night air, or the fright, I am not able to decide. All I remember now is, that I told the boy to wait for me, and, after a hasty toilet, I accompanied him to Mrs. Weis's house in East Tenth Street.

When one is in trouble, moments seem like hours, and so it probably appeared to Miss Luther that night; for, when we approached her aunt's house, the young lady, in spite of the inclemency of the weather, stood at the front door, looking up and down the street, apparently awaiting our arrival. Noticing her from a distance, I hastened my steps, and soon stood

before the pale and ghastly-looking girl, who ushered me into the parlor. She seemed nervous and excited, and unable to control her emotion. Bursting into tears, she hastily put a letter into my hand, on reading which, I felt that my presentiment had become reality. My strong nerves began to waver, while my eyes grew dim, as I perused the dreadful message, which was as follows:—

“MISS IDA LUTHER.

“*Dear Miss,*—In behalf of Mr. Henry Engelhardt, and as his attorney, I am instructed to inform you that the above-named gentleman is now on his way to Europe. He left by the Hamburg steamer yesterday. He desires me to state to you, that while he fully appreciates your noble nature, he can not and will not consent to your sacrificing yourself for his sake; and for this reason, freely and unconditionally releases you from your marriage engagement to him, as well as from all other promises connected with, or having arisen from, your matrimonial intentions. He furthermore wishes me to inform you, that he has taken the liberty to assign and convey to you all his personal property, now being on the premises formerly occupied by him in Avenue B, and that a deed conveying to you said goods and chattels, including a valuable Steinway piano, has already been put on record in the office of the Clerk of the Court of Common Pleas for the City of New York, with instructions to deliver said deed to you when recorded. He also begs of you not to lose your faith in him, but believe him to remain true and devoted to you, and that, if it be God’s will, you may hear from him again at some future time.

“In conclusion, I deem it my duty, in justice to Mr. Engelhardt and to myself, to state to you, that the foregoing was dictated to me by him, almost word for word, and that while dictating the letter, he was in full possession of his mental faculties and apparently perfectly calm and composed.

“If you desire it, I shall be ready at any moment to confirm and verify, by my verbal statement, in any court of law or

equity, what I have above asserted in writing; and I sincerely hope that I may be of some service to you, either in this matter or otherwise. Meanwhile, I remain,

“Yours very respectfully,

“ERASTUS FAIRCHILD,

“*Attorney-at-Law, No. —, Wall Street.*”

“It then seems that my presentiments have proved true,” said I to myself, while I was pondering over the strange contents of the fatal letter, which I still held in my hands.

“When did you receive this message, Miss Luther?” asked I, returning the document to her. Our eyes met when I asked the question. There was a world of grief stamped on her pale face, when she replied, —

“The letter was delivered here soon after six o’clock this evening, while my aunt and myself were absent from home. The servant handed it to me, on our return, at half past ten. I hesitated before sending to you; but you have proved such a true friend and kind adviser to us, that I was sure you would not feel offended for being disturbed at this late hour of the night in a case of emergency. The sudden blow has stunned and paralyzed me; and I feel perfectly helpless, and unable to act for myself. What shall I do?”

“Nothing, but submit to your fate for the present, and leave the rest to our kind Father in heaven,” said I firmly. “I know that Engelhardt loves you dearly and truly; and the power of that sacred feeling will bring him back to you, sooner or later. Keep up a brave heart, and never lose your faith in him.”

“Your words are comforting and stimulating,” said

Miss Luther. "I feel that I need not yet despair I will not lose my faith in him; and I promise to remain true and devoted to him in heart, soul, and body. So help me God!"

"Amen!" said Mrs. Weis, who had entered the room while her niece was still speaking.

A brief consultation now followed between us three, resulting in an invitation to Mr. Fairchild to favor us with a visit on the ensuing evening, after which I left the ladies, and returned to my home.

A high wind was raging at the time, the air was harsh and chilly, and my thoughts wandered to our poor blind friend, now drifting on the wild ocean. Shall we ever see him again? God only knows. Oh! were we but permitted to read the future; yet, after all, it is probably better that we are not able to do so.

In response to a note, addressed by me to the attorney, this gentleman made his appearance at Mrs. Weis's house precisely at eight o'clock on the following evening. He was rather stern, but polite, and by no means disagreeable. From him we learned that he (Fairchild) had tried his utmost to dissuade Engelhardt from leaving this country, showing him the folly of his undertaking, in his present helpless condition; but that his client had been so firm in his resolution, that it was impossible to induce him to abandon his plan. Engelhardt claimed that he had rich relatives in Dresden, who would not let him want for any thing, and that he considered it his sacred duty, under the present circumstances, to release Miss Luther from her engagement to him, as

she might at some future time regret her resolution to share his fate through a life of misery. Mr. Fairchild also informed us, that Engelhardt had discharged the boy Franz a day before his departure, but had substituted him by a larger and more intelligent young man, who accompanied him to Europe. We furthermore learned from the lawyer that Engelhardt had left as a second-cabin passenger in a Hamburg steamer; that Mr. Fairchild had accompanied him and his guide to the boat, where, on taking leave of him, he was instructed not to deliver the message until the next evening, and that he (Fairchild) was satisfied that Engelhardt's departure was not a rash act, prompted by the impulse of the moment, but a long-premeditated and well-laid plan, which statement justified the suspicions aroused in me in consequence of the strange remarks made by the unfortunate man on various occasions.

I must confess that my mind felt somewhat relieved when I heard the foregoing statement from the lips of Mr. Fairchild, while, at the same time, his last remarks, ascribing Engelhardt's departure to a premeditated plan, probably had an entirely different effect upon his forsaken bride, as it seemed to debar her from all hopes of ever seeing him again; whereas, had her lover taken the step hastily, remorse and shame might soon have brought him back to the object of his affection.

In what light the young lady looked upon the matter, I am unable to decide. At all events, she was made miserable for the time being.

I must now pass over a period of more than two

years, in which I saw Miss Luther and her aunt but seldom. The poor girl looked pale and sad, but seemed to keep up courage and a brave heart, perhaps in hopes of meeting her affianced in the blessed hereafter, where the blind shall see, the deaf hear, and the dumb sing praises to the Lord of hosts.

I had just returned from a short trip to the New England States, when one pleasant summer morning, in the month of July, 1865, the letter-carrier delivered me a letter, bearing a foreign postmark. Not expecting any letter from Europe at the time, I was anxious to learn who had written to me. Impatiently opening the letter, curiosity prompted me to look first at the signature, when, to my indescribable surprise and delight, I discovered that it was signed, "Henry Engelhardt." You may easily imagine how eager I was to learn the contents of the unexpected missive; and as you, dear reader, undoubtedly are equally anxious to hear what Engelhardt had to say for himself, I will give you a true copy of the letter at once. It was dated at Dresden, June the 12th, 1865, and was written in his own handwriting, thus showing that his eyesight must have been restored. It read as follows:—

"MY DEAR AND KIND FRIEND,— I write this letter at a venture, not being certain whether you are dead or alive. Even if you are still in the land of the living, you may have left New York, and emigrated to the Far West, or to the gold regions of California; but, wherever you may be, should this letter reach you, you will undoubtedly be surprised to hear from me, after a silence of more than two years, during which, let me assure you, I never did forget your disinterested and unwavering friendship, for which I so badly repaid you, by withholding from you

the secret which I carried with me for weeks previous to my departure. Can you ever pardon my deceit, and again look upon me as a friend? From my message to Ida, through my attorney, you will have learned what motive prompted me to leave her so abruptly. I could not endure the thought of letting the poor girl suffer with me, and through me; although I now feel, that, if she is still alive, her mental sufferings during the two years of our separation must have been very great. Let me give you a brief sketch of my life, from the moment the steamer left New York, as up to that time you are informed of my movements. Our passage was pleasant and comparatively short. I had but a slight touch of sea-sickness, and we landed in Hamburg, exactly three weeks from the date on which the steamer left New York. My guide kept in good health and spirits during the whole trip. We had taken with us several brass and string instruments; and, as he is quite a musical genius, we passed the time very pleasantly together. In Hamburg we staid but three days, and then went through to Dresden, where I was heartily welcomed by my uncle and aunt, who had been previously advised of my coming. Through their kindness and liberality I was enabled to procure the services of an eminent oculist, who, after a consultation with some of his associates, declared, that, while he did not wish to create in me hopes which might never be realized, he thought that there might be a possibility of having my eyesight restored after several years, not less than two or three, during which time I must be kept in a darkened room, from all outside influences which could disturb my peace of mind or in any way agitate or worry me, and that, while so confined, I must subject myself to the strictest diet, in order to obtain my health and physical strength. Can you doubt that I yielded to every thing, hoping that perhaps, at some distant day, I might again be permitted to behold that noble face which is ever vividly before my mind's eye? Willingly and cheerfully I consented to all I was asked to do, and surrendered myself unconditionally to the treatment of my learned medical adviser. A suite of rooms on the third floor of my uncle's house was assigned to me and my guide; and for two long and weary years, during which I led

the most monotonous life imaginable, I was kept in total darkness, until, on the first day of May, the doctor performed a successful operation on my eyes; after which it took about a month, during which my eyes were mostly bandaged, before I was allowed to use them at my own discretion. But, thank Heaven! this day, for the first time, I am permitted to read and write again; and it seems to me that my eyes are better and stronger than they were for a great many years previous to my misfortune. But I have not told you all yet, and I know you will be surprised and undoubtedly rejoiced to hear the following. I think I once told you, that, although my parents were both dead, my grandfather on my mother's side was still living. He boarded at my uncle's house, and took a very kind interest in me, and often told me that I was my mother's image. In the early part of February, the dear old man, who had attained the age of seventy-three, was taken seriously ill, and after a short spell of sickness died. Soon after his death, it was discovered that he had left a will, in which he remembered me very liberally; leaving me a round sum of money, equal to about twenty thousand dollars in American gold. This fact was wisely withheld from me till after the operation, and it is only a few days since I received the welcome news of my good fortune. God has been exceedingly good to me, and I yet hope to see all my friends again. I am now preparing to return to America; and if Ida still lives, and still loves me, I will make her my darling wife. I have told you all; and now I will leave it to you, and your good judgment, to prepare Ida for the good news. You brought the sad tidings of my blindness, and it is only just that you should now be the bearer of this joyful news. Ask her to forgive me, and ask her, if she would be glad to see me again; and if she says 'Yes,' then please write to me at once, and I will fly to her on the wings of love.

"And now, my dear friend, farewell for a while, until I shall have the great happiness to shake your hand once more on the free soil of America. Your sincere friend,

"HENRY ENGELHARDT."

Dear reader, my story is drawing to a close. You

may easily imagine how glad I was to be the bearer of the happy news. The poor girl was overjoyed. I read the letter to her, word for word; and when I had finished, she could no longer master her emotion, but, bursting into tears, she knelt down, and thanked God for his great mercy in giving back to her the idol of her heart. Arising, she took my hand in silence, while her eyes lighted up with hope and anticipated happiness. I promised to call again the next day; and, when I did so, I found her greatly improved in looks.

Wearily the time dragged on until the day on which the steamer was to arrive, which brought such precious freight for at least one heart that was almost bursting with joy. Finally the day came. I stood on the pier, among a group of anxious friends, to receive and welcome Engelhardt; and we all strained our eyes for the first glimpse of the noble ship. Suddenly our impatient and excited friend, Miss Luther, exclaimed, "There she comes!" And sure enough, much to our relief and gratification, slowly steaming up the bay was the ship. Nearer and nearer she came, until we could see objects restlessly moving to and fro upon her deck. Still nearer she drew; and there, in all his manliness, stood our returning friend, waving his handkerchief to attract our attention. When Miss Luther at last caught sight of him, her joy knew no bounds. After the formalities of the custom-house restrictions were complied with, the passengers were allowed to land. I will not attempt to describe the scene which now followed between the faithful lovers. May it suffice to say, that they

laughed and cried alternately, and embraced and kissed each other over and over again. Carriages being in waiting, we gave orders to drive home. On our arrival at the house, Mrs. Weis invited all to a sumptuous collation; and many were the toasts drank to the good health and happiness of our re-united friends, after which the guests withdrew.

October came in its autumnal glory. To the lovers the bright leaves never looked so bright before. The merry birds seemed to strain their tiny throats to sing their prettiest songs in gardens and in parks, and all nature seemed to smile her brightest smile. In a retired part of the busy metropolis, there could be seen a church, lighted up, and looking as though the good old sexton had tried his utmost to have this occasion one of the old sort of weddings, as he called it, with plenty of light on the subject. The friends sat as near the altar as they could possibly get, with all the patience they could command. Finally a whisper ran through the large assemblage. Then a rustle was heard, and another whisper, "Here they come!"

Slowly up the aisle came the happy pair, looking solemn, although their hearts were full of joy; while the deep-toned organ, grandly and proudly, yet tenderly and lovingly, pealed forth a wedding-march.

They kneel before the altar, —

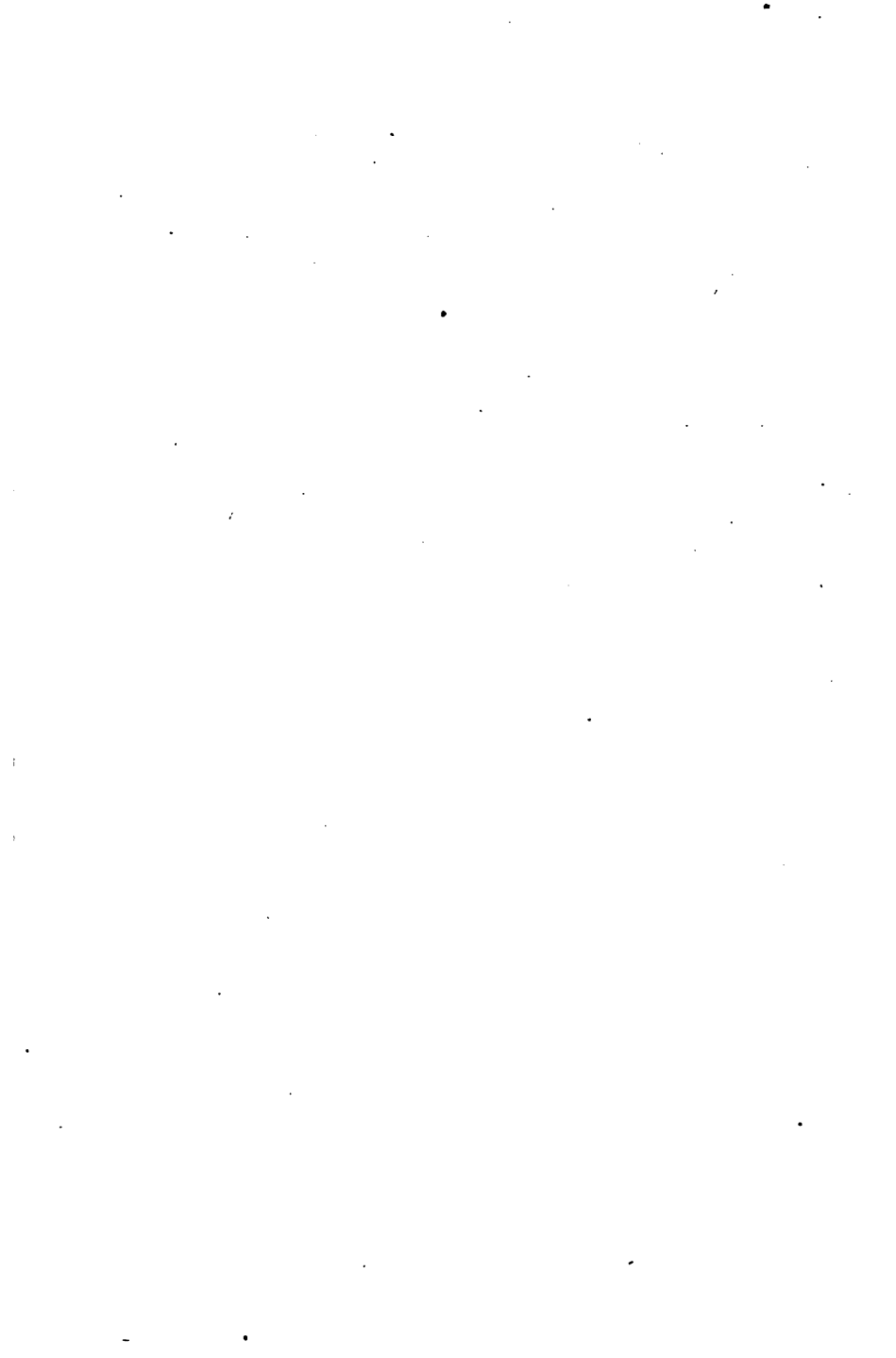
"The prayer is said,
The service read,"

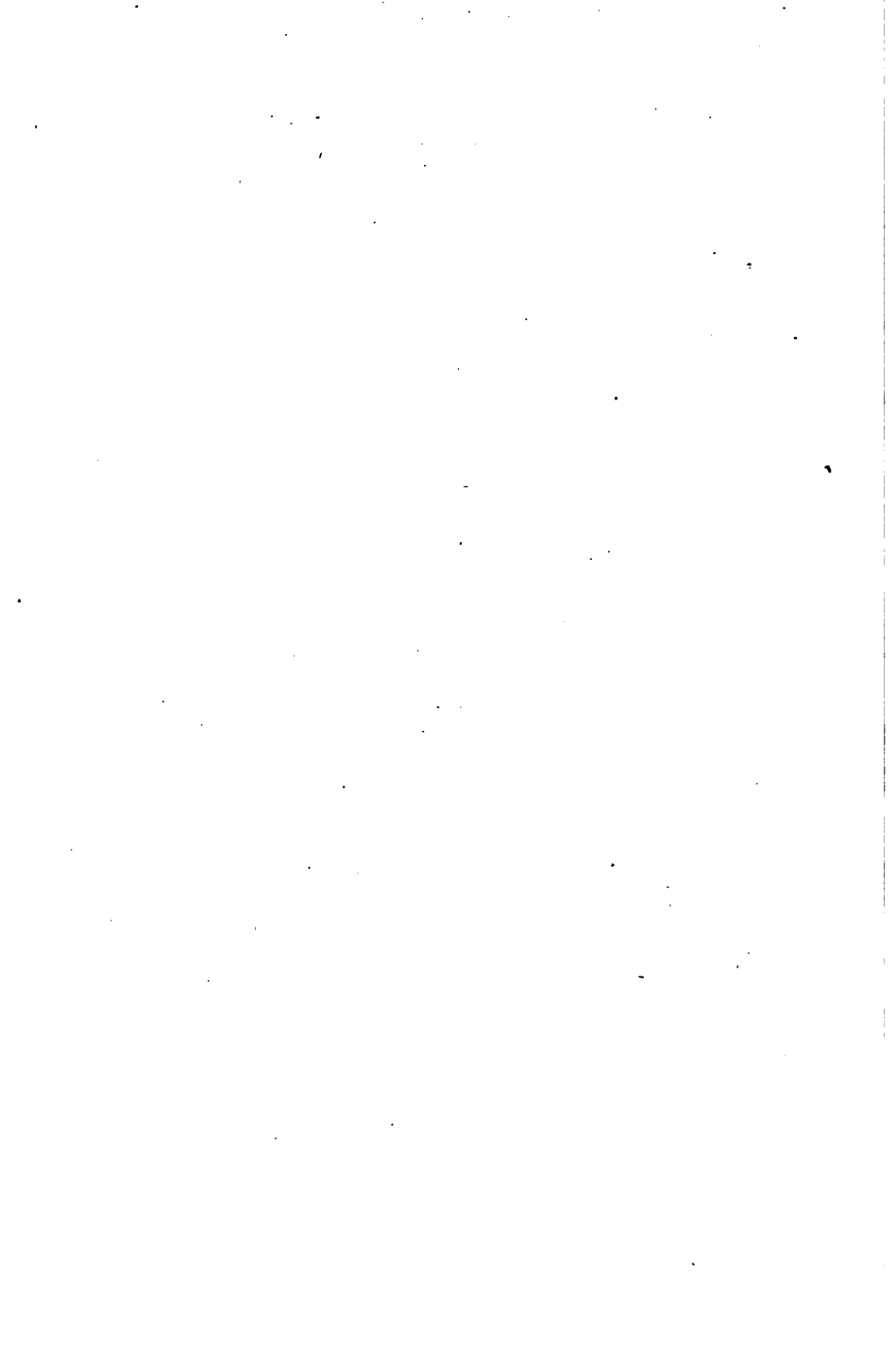
and he, who, in the darkness of his chamber across the wide ocean, had waited long and patiently, yet

almost hopelessly, for this hour, and she whose love and faith had grown stronger and truer as the years rolled on, were man and wife.

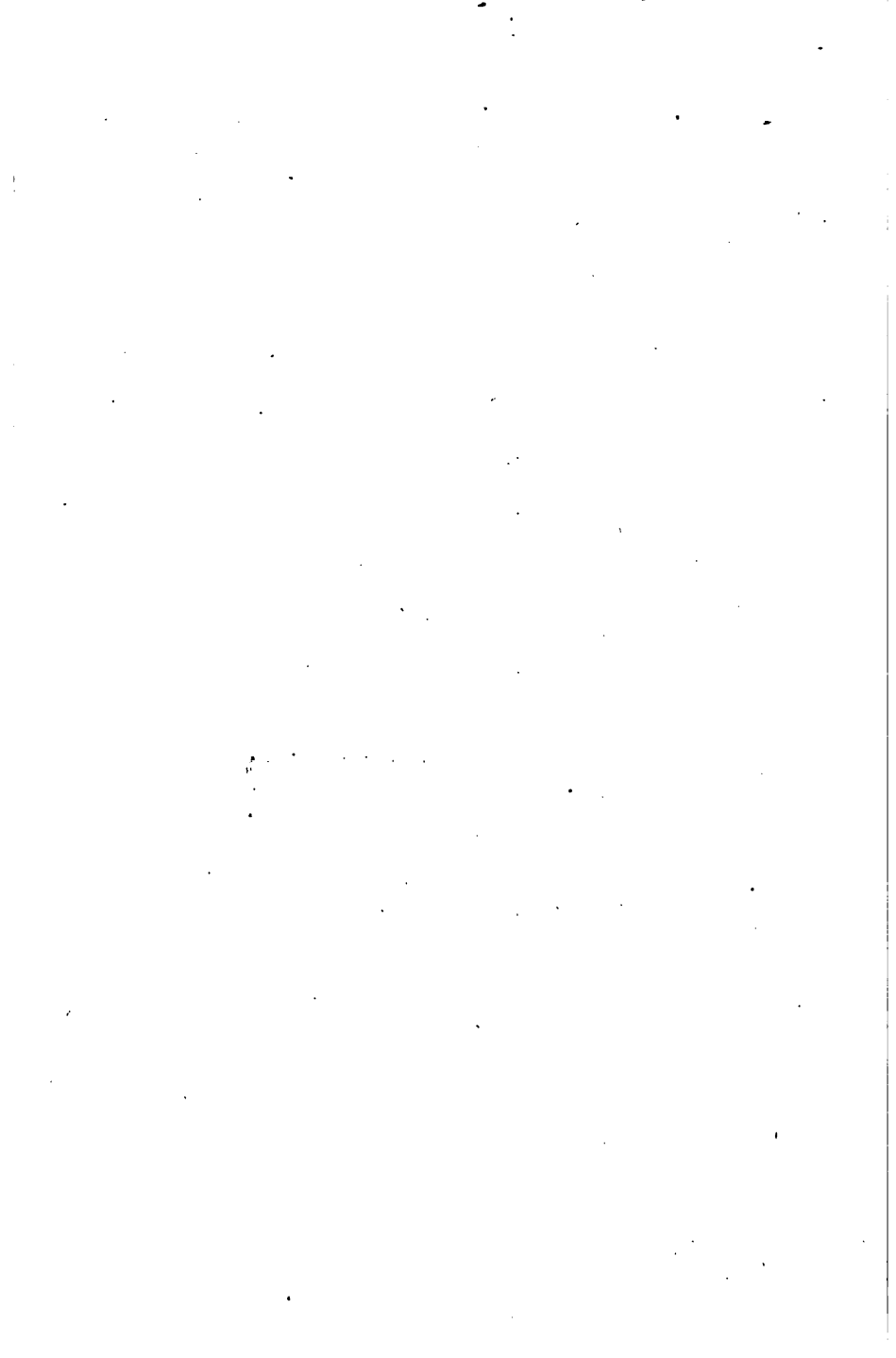
What God has joined,
Let no man put asunder.

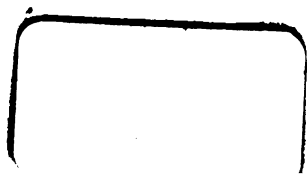
Nearly twelve years have elapsed since the happy event took place; and in justice to the true lovers, I must say, that, from all appearances, their married life has been one continued honeymoon. Heaven has blessed them with lovely children, who are growing up the joy and pride of their parents; and in the light of his present happiness, our friend Engelhardt feels that he has no cause to regret having spent *two years in darkness*.



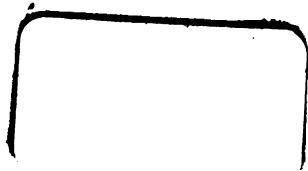












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